

B V

813

II 67

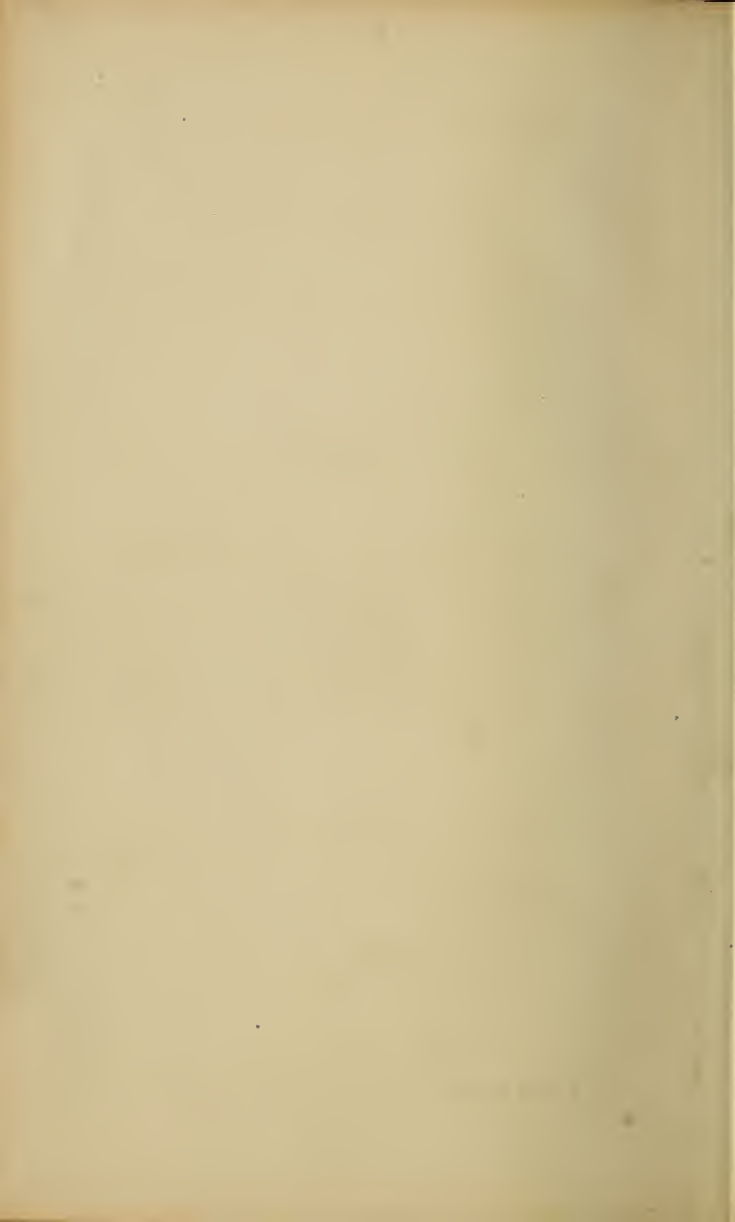
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. BV 813

Shelf 1 D 67

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





INFANT BAPTISM;

INCLUDING

A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS

ON THE

SUBJECT AND MODE OF BAPTISM,

DESIGNED, CHIEFLY

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE YOUNG.

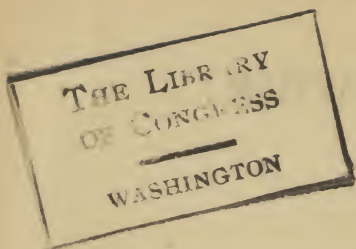
BY R. DOUGLASS.



PHILADELPHIA:

KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS, No. 9 SANSOM STREET.

1851.



BV 813
J67

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by
R. DOUGLASS,
in the Clerk's office of the District Court, for the Eastern
District of Pennsylvania.

6454-9-1

TO THE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND GUARDIANS OF
THE YOUTH OF PEDOBAPTIST CHURCHES.

THE motives which induced the Author of this small work to write upon the subject of which it treats, were, the hope that it might tend, at least, in some measure, to prevent those into whose hands it may fall, and for whom, especially, it is intended, from being drawn away from the simplicity of their faith in the doctrines it inculcates, and to check that party-proselyting zeal, which, alas! far from doing good, but tends to kindle up polemic strife upon a subject, which, in a period so eventful as the present, should have been left to slumber in oblivion, while the great doctrine of the Reformation,—*justification by faith*,—should more fully employ and call forth the varied talents of all Protestant Ministers in its defence and maintenance against “the man of sin.”

We cannot but pity the weakness and ignorance of those,—talented they may be,—whose unwise

and anti-christian efforts have made it a duty incumbent upon any of the lovers of truth and guardians of our youth, to undertake the task of writing such a work as is here presented for your consideration. And now having been—by promptitude and perseverance, even while laboring under the heavy pressure of affliction—accomplished, I would say, —should any of the curious peruse its pages with the expectation of finding them replete with great originality of thought, it is not unlikely that they will be, at least, somewhat disappointed, as this is, generally, if not always, the result of expecting too much from any author. Yet, he would venture to state, that it is not devoid of what he considers his own, in many of the arguments advanced; and altogether so,—such as it is,—in style of diction, except where there are quotations, which you will find marked by inverted commas. Ideas derived from a careful reading of other works, together with a few sentences which he has digested and thrown into his own mould, to suit the general style of the work, will be occasionally met with.

Presuming, therefore, upon the candor of the Christian public, that they will overlook the imperfections that may strike the critic's eye, and appre-

ciate the motives that influenced him in his first essay—he leaves it with them to judge how far he has succeeded in establishing and defending the doctrines it advocates; and should it but stimulate any who love the truth to effect that which this may have failed to accomplish, the object will be so far secured.

It will be seen that its chief appeal is made “to the law and to the testimony,” which it is the duty as well as privilege of our youth to consult.

By a proper attention to this duty, they will so understand what the Scriptures say upon the subject under consideration, that their minds will never be perplexed by the troublers of our Israel, who, when they labour, frequently expend it in attempts to draw away the fruit of other’s labour.

Let the youth then under your care so understand the subject of water baptism,—its *nature and design*,—as set forth in this work,—then its opponents, whose zeal would be commendable if expended in earnest attempts to enforce upon all the necessity of the Spirit’s Baptism, will be obliged to give up their fruitless efforts—efforts designed, especially, to draw away the lambs of the flock from their attachment to an ordinance the practice of which implies the belief, that infants are included in the covenant of

grace. If we can but imitate that zeal, the object of which we justly condemn, in giving to it a new direction, we will not have lived in vain; but will have the pleasure to reflect that we have been somewhat instrumental in bringing such with us, to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

That those under your care may the more easily understand, as well as retain what has been written in the following pages, it is presented to them chiefly, in the conversational form.

May your laudable undertaking be so crowned by the Divine blessing, that the objects of our peculiar regard may not be as children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and the cunning craftiness of men; but that they may safely ride in the broad bay of eternal truth "till the storm of life is past,"—the strife of tongues is o'er—is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

THE MODE.

SCHOLAR. What is water baptism, under the Gospel dispensation?

TEACHER. The proper application of water to its proper subjects, by the Ministers of Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

S. Where, in the New Testament, do we find water baptism first mentioned?

T. The first place you will find it is, Matt. iii. 6.

S. But, do not the Quakers confine the whole of the passages, that speak of water baptism, to that of the Spirit?

T. Yes; they generally confine the whole to the Spirit's baptism.

S. Can it be proved that, in this, they are not right?

T. That, in this respect, they are incorrect, we prove,—First, by the passage to which we have referred, where John is represented as the baptizer;—Secondly, by the words of John himself, where he says: “I indeed baptize you with *water*; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, *he* shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost, and with fire.*”

From these words we learn that it is the prerogative of Christ to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and that, therefore, the baptism of which John was the administrator was that of water.

S. Who, may I ask, was the first baptizer mentioned in the new Testament?

T. The first we read of was John, who baptized Christ.

S. You speak of John the Baptist, I suppose?

T. Yes; and for this plain reason, there was no other that administered that ordinance to Christ.

S. Was there no other called by that name?

T. No; not even John's own disciples, nor any others were at any time so called, till the sixteenth century.

S. But why was John so called? Was it to express his mode of baptism?

T. There is no proof from any part of God's word that it was so applied.

S. Are there not some who say that John was called baptist, because he immersed?

T. Yes; some of those who call themselves by his name, tell us so.

S. Have we anything in the New Testament to prove that John practised a different mode?

T. Yes; in Matt. iii. 11, we read,—“I indeed baptize you *with* water,”—thus you see, the Baptist describes what he himself practised.

S. But what if the word *with* should be rendered *in* water?

T. In such a case, to be consistent, it would have to be so rendered when applied to the baptism of the spirit;—then would we read thus,—“He (Christ) shall baptise (immerse) you *in* the HOLY GHOST and *in* FIRE.”

S. It strikes me forcibly that such a rendering of the passage, would not accord with the words of St. Peter, who, in reference to the Spirit’s baptism, said,—“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Joel ii. 28.

T. Very true, far from according with what the Apostle said on that memorable occasion, it would represent him as giving utterance, under the Spirit’s influence, to an absolute falsehood.

S. How does it represent the Apostle as speaking an untruth?

T. Plainly thus,—“to be baptised, as some affirm, is to be immersed; the disciples were baptised on the day of Pentecost, with the Holy Ghost; therefore, on that day they were immersed.” Now this, you will perceive, stands in direct opposition to the divine promise, as quoted by the Apostle on that day: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh.”—Acts ii. 17.

S. It is now reported that the immersionists have got up a new translation of the New

Testament, with the word baptize rendered immerse.

T. By such a rendering of the passage the error is so glaring that it should call forth a public declaration of high disapprobation from all Pedobaptist churches. Now, when the word baptize is so rendered, as by that rendering they go to prove that to *pour*, according to the language of the Scriptures, is to *immerse*, they then make it very easy work to maintain that *immersion means to pour out*.

S. Great must be the love of that system which has led to the daring attempt of altering the Word of God, and must be followed by pernicious consequences.

T. To say the least, it destroys the harmony of different texts. Take, for instance, the following passages,—“He that cometh after me, shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.” (Acts i. 5.) “And they were all *filled with* the Holy Ghost.” (Acts ii. 4.) “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” (verse xvi.) “I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh.” (verse xvii.; Joel ii. 28.) Alter, then, in any of these texts, either the word *baptize*, or the word *with*, and what becomes of the harmony? But take the whole as they are, and you have an unbroken chain, composed of the following links,—First, you have the prediction of John, that Christ

would baptize with the Holy Ghost.—Secondly, the promise of Christ, by which he informed his Apostles, that, after the lapse of a few days, they should receive the baptism of the Spirit.—Thirdly, this promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles and disciples of our Lord.—Fourthly, in this, as we have seen, the Apostles could discern the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel ii. 28. That the prophecy, in this passage, speaks of an *out-pouring*, none, I presume, who believe the Bible to be the Word of God, will *attempt* to deny; and that the prediction was *fulfilled* by an *out-pouring*, I cannot conceive, how any *can* deny. Should it, however, be questioned that the prediction was fulfilled by an out-pouring, then we would have no more agreement between the thing promised, and the mode of its accomplishment, than exists between the views of immersionists and those who believe sprinkling or pouring to be more scriptural.

S. John then, it appears, could not have been called Baptist because he immersed.

T. Just so; and in this light, I think it will appear to all whose minds are not, by prejudice, warped upon the subject. And could we suppose that John was called Baptist, because he immersed, then, by parity of reason, it would follow that the Apostles did not immerse because they are not called Baptists.

S. But do we not read that John baptized in Jordan?

T. Yes; in Mark i. 9, we read thus; "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan."

S. Does it not then appear that he immersed?

T. No; for the phrase, *in* Jordan,—in the *river* Jordan,—may mean any place within its banks which were, and are still, shelving, so that those who attended it could go some distance from the first bank before they reached the edge of the water.

S. Is there any scripture to support this idea?

T. There is, both plain and positive. In Josh. iii. 8, we read, "When ye are come to the *brink* of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still *in* Jordan."

S. But do we not read, (Mark i. 5,) that John baptized "in the *river* Jordan?"

T. Yes; truly so; but remember, it was, as John himself has said,—"*with* water."

S. Do we not read that John went to Enon to baptize, because there was much water there?

T. We are indeed informed that he went there because of the water.

S. Does it not then follow, if he went there because of the abundance of water in that place,

that this was, therefore, necessary for the right performance of the ordinance?

T. No; from the passage you have quoted, it does not appear that he wanted any more water than he could conveniently apply to the body.

S. How do you prove this?

T. The thing is very clear from the fact that the original word which, by our translators, is rendered *much*, is correctly,—being a plural word,—translated *many*. John then went to Enon,—a word which signifies the city of springs,—*because* there were *many* waters there.

S. But why should he want many waters?

T. Not for the purpose of immersion, for which one stream would answer as well as a thousand.

S. For what end then were the many waters required?

T. Doubtless, it was for the same purpose for which the Israelites encamped, by the waters in Elim. (Exodus xv. 27.)* Now, when we consider that “all Judea, and *all* the region round about Jordan *were baptized of him,*” (John) within the space of six months, part of which was spent in preaching, in imprisonment, and in procuring locusts and wild honey to restore his exhausted bodily powers,—when all this is considered, to-

* Let the young reader, by a careful examination of the passage, learn the purpose for which the Israelites encamped in Elim.

gether with the days both of the ecclesiastical and natural year in which he could not have baptized, it is not at all probable that he plunged them, and that therefore the "*many waters*" were required for the end to which I have referred, or that for which Deborah drew Sisera to the river Kishon (Judges iv. 7,) where Elijah slew Baal's prophets. (1 Kings, xviii. 4.) It cannot be supposed that these resorted thither for the purpose of immersion.

S. Does it not appear from Matt. iii. 16, that Christ was immersed?

T. The phraseology of John, on this subject, is so plain that it needs no explanation; and therefore we may use it as a guide in explaining passages, that in relation to the mode of baptism, may be considered more obscure; and it must be confessed that the Baptist had the best right to describe what he himself practised. To say then that John immersed is a mere assumption; and one not only against the strongest probability, but also against the plainest and most unequivocal term that could be employed in relation to the mode,—"**WITH WATER.**"

S. But how could Christ come up out of the water if he had not been in it?

T. Very true; if he had not been in it he could not have come up out of it; and it is equally true that it may be justly rendered *down to*, and *up*

from ; but be this as it may, we shall simply take it as we read it,—“went up straightway out of the water.” (Matt. iii. 16.) In all this “there is nothing about his going *down under* the water, or his coming *up from under* the water.” And, indeed, it would be very strange if there were, within the sacred page, such a flat contradiction of the mode so plainly described by John.

S. Is it not said, when speaking of Philip and the Eunuch, that “They went down both into the water both Philip and the Eunuch ; and he baptized him ?” Acts viii. 38.

T. Yes ; we so read in our translation ; but be it known that some of the best Greek scholars fearlessly affirm that the prepositions in the original,—given by the Spirit’s inspiration,—may be rendered *to* and *from*. But taking the passage as we find it in our present version, we cannot even then imagine that it conveys the idea of immersion, especially, when we take into consideration the circumstances under which baptism was then performed together with the customs of the East ; viz., that the Orientals, when they went to wash, or even take up water in their hands to drink, were accustomed to step *into* it,—this the heat of their climate made refreshing, while the dress of their feet rendered it quite convenient. In this our day ministers have gone with their candidates into the water, and, after baptizing by sprinkling or pouring, have

come up out of it. I will now give you a case in point respecting a Methodist minister and a Baptist minister, who baptized at the same time and place. The immersor took his candidate, and while going down, said, "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch,"—and after immersing him, he came out, saying by the way, "And they came up out of the water." Some of the spectators doubtless listened thus far, as to oracular proof of the necessity of immersion. Next the Wesleyan minister took his candidate, and *went down into the water*, repeating the same words—"And they went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch," and then took water and *poured* it upon his candidate, and *came up repeating*—"And they came up out of the water, both Philip and the Eunuch." Thus you plainly see that ministers may do all that Philip is said to have done, without going under the water. The fact is, the narrative forbids our saying there was a sufficient quantity of water for the immersion of the Eunuch. The terms employed by the narrator will apply to the smallest quantity of water; but cannot apply to a river. "*A certain water*," is the literal rendering of the passage. Both geography and history show that it was not a river. Hierome, who lived several years at Jerusalem, and was well acquainted with the country, reports that about twenty miles from Jerusalem, in the

road towards Hebron, there is a village called Bethsoran, near to which is a mountain, at the bottom or foot whereof is a spring, where"—as we read in the Acts of the Apostles—"the Ethiopian was baptized by Philip." The spring here spoken of is still in existence, and goes by the name of the Ethiopian fountain.

As we have already spoken of the fact that Christ was baptized, we will now inquire into its design. You doubtless desire to know why the Saviour should come to John to receive baptism.

S. Earnestly do I desire it, and permit me to inquire, Is there anything in the New Testament upon the subject?

T. The New Testament; as to the design of the Saviour's baptism, is most explicit. We learn, (Matt. iii. 15), that it was "*to fulfill all righteousness.*"

S. If this was the end for which the Saviour was baptized,—for what end did John's disciples receive the ordinance?

T. It is right to inquire into this, and I will, therefore, just here observe, that Christ did not mean by the expression,—"*fulfill all righteousness,*"—that he should receive it just to answer the end for which others received from it his fore-runner.

S. How are we to understand the meaning of the expression,—"*fulfill all righteousness.*"

T. We learn (Acts xix. 4; Mark i. 4,) that John baptized unto repentance, and for the remission of sins. It will not, in the face of this, be denied that the Baptist knew the end for which he administered the ordinance to others, nor yet can it be supposed that he was unacquainted with the character of Christ whose way he was sent to prepare. Let, then, these two things be deeply engraven in your memory.—First, the end of John's baptism which was, as he himself expressed it—“Unto repentance, and for the remission of sins.”—Secondly, the character of Christ, as we find it on the page of the record—“holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” In view of this character, as it appears, John declined baptizing Christ,—“I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” John could not conceive for what end the Saviour should come to him to receive it, being fully aware that, in the nature of things, it would not answer the end of his baptism, which, as we have seen, was unto repentance; and, knowing, as he did, that Christ had no sins to repent of, he would, doubtless, on this very ground, decline baptizing him. But when John said, “I need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”—the Saviour then replied—“Suffer it to be so now; for thus it behooveth us to fulfill all righteousness,”—*i. e.* every righteous law, or appointment. The expression—“Behooveth

us," is the same as if he had said, "It is necessary that the ordinance, *you*,—now in the legal line of the Priesthood,—should administer, and *I*,—destined to be a Priest after the order of Melchisedeck,—should receive."

S. How does this appear?

T. "John was THE VOICE, or herald, and Jesus THE MESSIAH, for whose coming and public manifestation he was to proclaim." Christ and John;—the one the High Priest, (Heb. vii. 17,) and the other his forerunner, then, as you have seen, in the legal line of the priesthood,—were both, according to the Jewish law, circumcised, and thus became debtors to do the whole law. (Gal. v. 3.) Now, as under the law, the High Priest was initiated into his office by *washing and anointing*, so it "behooveth," or was proper for Christ to be baptized by John, who was, in this instance, "employed in a ministry quite distinct from his common one, and by which he was made witness of the sign which God had previously appointed.—" "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." In this we have three things to consider.—First, Christ was then about thirty years of age—an age at which men, under the law, entered into the priesthood. (Luke iii. 23; Núm. iv. 3.)—Secondly, the application of water to Christ, by his forerunner, which answered to the

law of washing, which was performed by sprinkling. (Num. viii. 6, 7.)—Thirdly, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, which strikingly pointed him out, according to the previous sign, as the *Messiah*—the ANOINTED ONE,—the voice from heaven rendering it still more striking,—answered to the holy anointing oil, (Exodus xxx. 30,) which was poured upon the head of those who were set apart for the priesthood. (Psalm cxxxiii.; Acts x. 37, 38.) From what has just been said, it will, I think, appear very plain that Christ's baptism, administered by John, was no more designed as an example for us, except as to general obedience, than the fact of his being crucified, &c., which, likewise, belonged to his priestly office.

S. But was not John's baptism Christian baptism?

T. No; that it was not, and, indeed, could not be, to you will be quite evident when you consider the following reasons,—First, gospel baptism was not instituted till after Christ's resurrection. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Here we have the form of words to be used, which, before this, you will find no where in the New Testament. Secondly, John was denominated forerunner, which character, as we have seen, he sustained in reference to the promised "seed," whose way he was sent to prepare. The gospel dispensation was not then commenced; for the ceremonial law was still

in force. This we learn from the fact that Christ commanded it to be observed. (Mark i. 44.) "Show thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded." Now, as the offering of beasts, according to this law, was typical of the one offering of Christ, it must have remained in force till the antetype was offered,—hence, when Jesus hung upon the cross, he cried, "It is finished !" that is, the ceremonial law is abolished, and thus, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, &c.," he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. (Col. ii. 14.) It is worthy of remark, that Jesus, before his sacrificial death, instituted the Holy Supper, (1 Cor. xi. 23,) and that he instituted also, after his resurrection, and a little before his ascension, the ordinance of water baptism, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Thirdly, that Apollos, though mighty in the Scriptures, *only* knew the baptism of John, (Acts xviii. 24, 25, 26.) This, you perceive, was considered inferior to that administered by the Apostles ; consequently, it was necessary that Aquilla and Priscilla, who understood the nature of our Lord's baptism, should teach him the way of the Lord more perfectly. Fourthly, we now come to Acts xix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, for, if possible, a fuller confirmation of what has been so scripturally established. From this passage we learn that certain disciples at Ephesus, though they had received

John's baptism, were, notwithstanding, quite ignorant of the doctrine of the Spirit's personality ; yea, they had not so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost. We need not then wonder that the Apostle, on hearing this, should inquire, "Unto what then were you baptized?" As if he had said, "Ye surely could not have received Christian baptism, otherwise you could not be ignorant of a thing so essential to the validity of the ordinance." These, therefore, were baptized over again, and by this Apostolic act, the fact is proclaimed,—that *John's baptism is not Christian baptism.*

The language of St. Mark, as found in the commencement of his gospel, cannot be fairly construed to invalidate the truth of what has been just advanced. The evangelist speaks of the *beginning* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ ; and, in doing so, it is evident that he does not intend, by such an expression, to affirm that the erection of the visible church of Christ commenced with the preaching of John the Baptist ; but, thereby, simply informs us, that as the Prophets spoke of John as the divinely appointed forerunner sent to prepare the way of the Lord, he would, therefore, commence his gospel of Christ by speaking of his *voice*, or *herald*, who was sent to declare,—“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God *is at hand*,”—*not here*,—“is come *nigh* unto you.”

It will be granted, I presume, that the first Christian church was formed, by the Apostles, on the Day of Pentecost, at Jerusalem. Here they tarried according to the advice given them by our Lord, and here too, in attending to the spirit and letter of the commission, they added to the church,—to do so they had but part of a day—**THREE THOUSAND SOULS!**

S. So forcible, in relation to this subject, are the convictions of truth in my mind, that I do unwaveringly believe what you have so scriptually established.

T. In addition to the ideas already advanced, and which have had so happy an effect upon your mind, there is another, which, to say the least, can have no tendency to draw you back to the inferior baptism of John.

S. I must confess, whatever may become of any human system, I should like to hear what tends to verify that truth,—“*He* (Christ) must increase; but *I* (John) must decrease.”

T. To deepen, if possible, the impressions of truth already made, I would just inquire—If the baptism of John had been Christian baptism, and if Christ, in receiving it at his hands, had designed it as an example for others to follow, would he not have been the first to receive it from him? If others, then, received baptism before our Lord received it from his forerunner—what reason have we to con-

clude that he intended his reception of it as an example for others? Surely not, at least, for those who preceded him in that ordinance.

S. What you have advanced is clear and convincing; but may I not ask—Should we not hear what others have to say upon the subject?

T. Yes; with our religious principles well established, we may, not to neglect what is of greater importance, occasionally listen to what others, who hold all the essential doctrines of the Gospel, have to advance against our religious views; but then you must learn,—keeping before the mind the conduct of the Apostles who directed the attention of John's disciples to Christ,—how to guard against the wily attempts of those who would lead your mind back to the *inferior* baptism of John; for, while such assume the office of a Mentor, they need, as well as Apollos, to be taught the way of God more perfectly.

S. To me it appears quite evident, from what you have advanced and proved by the Scriptures, that there are different kinds of baptism spoken of in the New Testament.

T. From a thoughtful consideration of the passages already cited, you will perceive, that there are more kinds than you, at first, discovered. John administered two, different in their nature,—First, his *common* one, which was *unto repentance*, (Matt. ii. 11.)—Secondly, the baptism of Christ

which, as he was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,” was *not* unto repentance; but *special* in its character. It was on this ground, as we have seen, that John declined baptising Christ.

S. I perceive that the New Testament,—its phraseology, in reference to the subject in hand, being neither complex nor hard to be understood,—speaks of more kinds of baptism than one, as administered by man.

T. In this you are correct; and, according to my views, there are two more, somewhat different, to be brought forward.

S. I must confess I feel much surprised at these statements: for, though I have frequently read the New Testament, yet I have not made the discovery.

T. Your frank acknowledgment in this respect does not in the least surprise me, as I can account for it from the probable fact, that you have not, in particular, or before the present moment, bent your attention to it. The difference of which I speak—bear it well in your mind—is not in reference to the mode, but to the *design* of the ordinance, and the *form of words* to be employed in its administration.

S. I feel thankful for the instruction you have given me, and will endeavor, the next time I commence to read the New Testament regularly

through, to keep in mind what you now have advanced upon the subject.

T. It is proper that you should examine the Scriptures, for yourself, upon this symbolic rite,—a rite, by some, exalted much higher than it was ever, by thought or deed, elevated by the Apostles : for we cannot conceive of its being so, without their giving some notice of it. That you may, in your future attempts, critically to examine the New Testament upon this subject, be led to a just and certain conclusion in reference thereto, it is necessary that you should be apprized of the fact—that there is a distinction between the ordinance of baptism which, as we read, was either administered by the Apostles, or by Christ himself before his death, and that which the Apostles administered after his resurrection.

S. As your language here seems to imply a doubt as to whether the former was administered by Christ, or his Apostles, may I ask,—Is there any way of solving the difficulty ?

T. Whether we can solve the difficulty or not, as to who were the administrators of the ordinance—the fact that it was administered by others as well as John, previous to the resurrection of Christ, will alike serve my purpose.

S. May I ask if there is any portion of Scripture to prove the fact of which you speak, and to justify the conclusions which you draw ?

T. In the Gospel by St. John, we are informed that “Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.” (John iv. 1, 2.) What is thus stated took place, A.D. 27 ; but not one word about baptizing in the name of the Trinity ; and had it been so performed it would, no doubt, if held as a thing essential to the validity of the ordinance, have been mentioned. Be it observed that the *new form of words*, as contained in the commission delivered by our Lord to his Apostles were, doubtless, designed to distinguish the administration of the ordinance,—an ordinance, likely, first administered by the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, which was the commencement of the New Dispensation, and one as most befitting that significantly denominated the Dispensation of the Spirit. But to return : were we to take the words just as we read them,—“Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,”—then are we led to conclude that the disciples of Christ baptized, but Christ himself baptized none. This passage, however, is rendered, by the Rev. G. Jackson, thus,—“Though, truly, Jesus himself baptized none except his disciples.” This rendering of the passage undoubtedly agrees well with John iii. 22. Admitting this to be a correct rendering of the words before us, I then ask,—Would Jesus baptize in his own name ? I think not. Or, if we conclude that Christ did not baptize, but that his disciples did ; in what name, I ask, did they bap-

tize? The *form* of words to be used in baptizing, are as follows:—"In the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*." This not given till the resurrection from the dead.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

S. Did the Apostles act on this commission, and baptize in this name?

T. As men of God they were faithful to the solemn charge.

S. Will you inform me where we find any account of their baptizing after they received that commission?

T. You will find the information you want in the record of their acts.

S. Did they resort to rivers to perform the ordinance?

T. Not at all times: for you will find, by a careful perusal of the book of Acts, that they baptized wherever most convenient; sometimes in the open air, and at other times in private houses.

S. Can you refer me to any particular passage that bears upon this point?

T. Yes; in Act ix. 18, we have an account of the baptism of Saul of Tarsus,—here it is simply stated that he arose and was baptized; but all is as silent as the grave, as to any concourse of people going along to see this once great opposer, but now meek convert to the Christian faith, immersed in some well known river or pond. The ordi-

nance, you see, was administered wherever they worshipped ; and, in this, the Apostles acted under the law of necessity. Let it be noted here, that there were then no Christian places of worship erected and set apart for the service of God,—had there been such, it is not at all likely that they would have left these to perform, elsewhere, the sacred rite.

S. Can you inform me where Ananias baptized Saul of Tarsus ?

T. The information you want will be found in Acts ix. 11 and 17. There you learn, that Saul, afterwards the great Apostle of the Gentiles, was baptized in the house of one Judas.

S. Have we any other account of private baptism, or of baptism in a private house ?

T. In Acts x. 47, 48, we have an account of Cornelius and his family, in their own house, receiving baptism. And what place so suitable as the place where they received the *baptism of the Spirit* ? “Can any man,” said the Apostle, “*forbid* water, (to be brought), that these should not be baptized ?” “And he commanded them,” as it appears, *there* and *then*, “to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” “Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

S. I feel the subject still more interesting as you advance, and must say, I never, till now, saw the Scriptures so plain upon this point.

T. Glad am I, indeed, to find that you are still becoming more strongly established in the truth of the doctrine I have advanced, and can assure you that if all young persons were so established, it would tend to prevent much of that mischief which is the mere result of a party-proselyting zeal.

S. I should like to know if there is, on the record, any other account of baptism being performed in private dwellings?

T. We learn, (Acts xvi. 32, 33,) that a case of this kind took place at Philippi. This passage informs us that the jailer and his family were baptized by the Apostles in his own private residence. "And they speak unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house." "And he took them the *same hour of the night*, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, *he and all his*, STRAIGHT WAY." Prejudiced, indeed, must the mind be, that is not convinced by truth so clear and plain.

S. Having, so far, given me full satisfaction, permit me here to inquire,—Does not the expression—"Buried with Christ in baptism,"—refer to the mode?—if so, can it have reference to any except that of immersion?

T. Let us then examine the passage where the term occurs. The first place in which we find it is, Rom. vi. 4. Its parallel in Col. ii. 12. That both these passages refer to the baptism of the

Spirit, is clear from the connection in which they stand. The chapter from which the first of these texts is taken commences with a question containing a popular objection, frequently brought to bear against the doctrine of salvation by grace. "What shall we then say? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" As if the Apostle had asked—"Is this the conclusion of your minds as to the doctrine of abounding grace?" This objection, in the course of his argument, he fully meets; and from the second to the sixth verse inclusive he brings forward five figures to illustrate the great subject of spiritual baptism. The first figure employed is *death*,—"How shall we that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein?" (verse 2d.) "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." (verse 3d.) Can the Apostle, in these passages, refer to the outer man? Certainly not; for the body, at least, in Christian lands, is never buried until life becomes extinct,—hence, he manifestly refers to the death of the old man—"the body of sin." (verse 6th.) We now come to the question—What is buried into Christ's death? Is it this corporeal frame? No! it is that which becomes actually dead,—"*the body of sin*." The moment we entertain the thought, that all that of which the Apostle speaks in this connection, is effected by the application of water to the body, or the body

to water, we are, so far, prepared to embrace the Papistical doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Again, could we suppose that the word buried conveys the idea of immersion, and that the term baptism also means the same, then do we put into the mouth of the Apostle the following tautology, —“Therefore we are *immersed* with him by *immersion* into his death.” The third figure brought forward is that of the *resurrection*, —“That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (verse 4th.) As if the Apostle had said, We, who by the baptism of the Spirit have the body of sin buried in the grave of Christ, and having risen with him, must also, by a holy life and conversation, evidence that spiritual resurrection. As the body of Christ, which was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, lay in the grave, and rose again—leaving that mortal state—so, likewise the soul of the believer that was buried in sin, having that destroyed by which it was held in bondage, rises to sit with Christ in heavenly places. The fourth figure is taken from *husbandry*. “For as we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall also in the likeness of his resurrection.” The seed that is put into the earth derives therefrom all that nourishment necessary for its growth, expansion, strength, and fruitfulness. To follow out the figure, we say, that the death

of Christ is the soil, in which, by the baptism of the Spirit, all true believers are planted, and from which, all their moral fruitfulness and beauty spring. The fifth figure brought forward is *crucifixion*,—"Knowing this, that the old man is *crucified* with him, that the *body of sin* might be *destroyed*, that henceforth we should not serve sin." It was on the cross that Jesus voluntarily expired,—had he not done so—who could have had power to take his life? Hear his own words,—“I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again.” In his obedience unto death,—the death of the cross,—he submissively bowed to the will of his heavenly Father,—“Not my will,” he says, “but thine be done.” “In the volume of the Book it is written,” of Christ, “a body hast thou prepared me,”—which body, as it is here intimated, it was the Father’s will should be crucified. We have brought into the world with us a body of sin, which, having grown with our growth, it is the will of God should be crucified, or put to death. Christ, as we have seen, voluntarily submitted to die; and so must we submit to have “the old man” crucified, or otherwise go with all our members to perdition. Nothing, remember, but the baptism of the Spirit will prove saving.

S. I see clearly that St. Paul could not have said all this in reference to a baptism which he

thanked God he had not administered, except to a few.

T. Your views in this respect are very correct ; and to me it is evident that any attempt to apply, in any other way, the different figures employed by the Apostle in the passages before us, would be unnatural and forced, and would, in the nature of things, tend to destroy the whole strength of his argument. But admitting that the Apostle, in the verses referred to, (Rom. vi. 2--6,) speaks of the baptism of the Spirit, upon which he lays the greatest stress, his reasoning will then have its usual force, and will teach us this important truth ; viz., that by this baptism we are *crucified, dead, buried, planted and raised with Christ*. Can all this, then, be *effected* by water ? Revelation alone, as we have seen, can decide the question.

S. Did you not speak of another passage of Scripture, where the term buried is employed in connection with the word baptism ?

T. Yes ; but as the Apostle speaks of other figures in that connection, I will therefore call your attention to the whole as they come in order. These you will find in Col. ii. 11, 12. The figures here employed are, circumcision, burial, and resurrection. That the first of these figures refers to the baptism of the Spirit, is plain from the statement of the Apostle—"A circumcision made *without hands*, in the putting off the body of the sins of

the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." The second and third figures apply to the same spiritual change of which we have spoken,—"*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD,*" —Not with the hands of human administrators.

S. Does not the word *buried*, when taken in connection with the term *baptism*, lead to the idea of *immersion*?

T. The figure of speech before us, I rather think, has led some, especially through the influence of others, to this conclusion; but let such, with a mind open to conviction, simply ask the question,—Does the Apostle speak of the body of flesh and bones being buried?—or of the "old man," which is crucified with Christ?—and thus in the association of ideas, the mode of immersion cannot rush to the mind.

S. I perceive that whosoever would maintain, that the passage just quoted refers to the mere passing of the body under the water, must come to the absurd conclusion, that the submerged body is raised "through the faith of the operation of God."

T. Just so; the premiss can lead to no other conclusion. But as some one may inquire—Is there no reference, in the text, to a particular mode of burial? To this we reply that "the Bible is intended to be understood alike by all nations. All

do not bury alike. Some inter, some burn, some embalm. Some deposite in vaults, some hang up the body until the flesh decays. But not one buries by forcing the body through the element—not one resembles the mode, the way of immersion—not one the death of Christ.—It was a death on a mount, which took place when elevated, on a cross—and our baptism is into the likeness of his death. A death for and unto sin.”

S. As the Apostle has used the word circumcision in other parts of his writings, and as you have not said much upon the subject, I should like, if agreeable, to hear you somewhat enlarge upon it.

T. You may be sure, my young friend, it will afford me much pleasure to give you, on this, or any other subject, what information I can. You have then already seen, in the passage before us, that we are presented with a *circumcision* and *baptism* glorious and all powerful in their results.

S. But have not some affirmed that circumcision was intended merely as a bage of national distinction?

T. Yes ; the love of opinion and a determination to support a cause, have led some, even men of learning and piety, to express themselves so ; but it is quite evident that the Apostle in this passage and the Holy Spirit under whose inspiration he wrote, were of a different mind. That the circumcision

spoken of in this passage is *spiritual* we can have no doubt: for it was by this last the Colossian Christians were quickened into spiritual life—so the Apostle informed them, and we ought not to understand it in a different sense,—“ You, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he *quickened*.” Let it be understood that these believing Gentiles were not circumcised in the flesh—on this we presume—forasmuch as that external rite had then ceased, and baptism had then been appointed in its stead; but the circumcision, by which they were renovated, was “ the circumcision of Christ,” “ *made without hands*.”

S. I should like to be a little better informed respecting the peculiar expression—“ *circumcision of Christ?*”

T. It is well, as much as possible, to understand the phraseology of Scripture, on this subject. The term, then, under consideration, must either refer to the circumcision that Christ received, when but eight days old—(Luke ii. 21;) or one which Christ as Head of the Church appointed to take place. That it refers to the external rite that Christ received in infancy, no one can rationally suppose; for it is a circumcision “ made without hands.” It follows then that the circumcision spoken of is one that Christ himself appointed; and as all his appointments belong to the New Testament dispensation—those of the Old Testa-

ment having been made by the Father—it is, therefore, with great propriety that it is called “*the circumcision of Christ.*”

S. If such is the meaning of the term circumcision in this connection—what does the Apostle mean by the term “of baptism” in the passage?

T. Though we have already touched upon this subject, it will, notwithstanding, still afford me pleasure to meet, as far as possible, your lawful wishes. An answer to your question will be found in the words which we have, as you will recollect, explained when speaking on Col. ii. 12; and which, with its parallel, forms a kind of rallying point for immersionists. In this verse we find a *baptism* of the Spirit answering to the *circumcision* made without hands,—an *inward* circumcision and an *inward* baptism,—a baptism by which a Christian rises “by the faith of the operation of God.” Can you then, my young friend, or any one bearing the Christian name, even imagine, that all this means nothing more than the body rising out of the water? Would not this, with a witness, confound “the faith of the operation of God” with the feeble hands of those who are weak enough to think that they fulfill all righteousness by submerging the body of the candidate in the watery element and raising it up again! May the God of salvation and truth save us, and all “that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,” from such a dangerous mode of in-

terpretation !—a mode which manifestly explains away the mind of the Holy Ghost in the passage, and which proclaims a recklessness of consequences which beggars all description !! That the baptism and circumcision in the passage before us is one—*decidedly one*, and the *same*—is quite evident from the fact that they stand *immediately connected*,—they are attended with the *same saving results*—and the circumcision is called, as we have seen, “*the circumcision of Christ.*”

S. Did Christ appoint baptism to symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit ?

T. Yes ; and, be it known, that he *appointed no other* to represent, under the New Dispensation, **THAT GREAT WORK.** It is, then, as “clear as light, and as certain as truth”—that “the circumcision of Christ” is BAPTISM. You will now perceive that the Apostle, in the passage, designed not only to connect baptism and circumcision as outward and visible signs of the same “invisible and glorious moral renovation ;” but also to show, that baptism under the Christian dispensation is intended to answer to circumcision under the Mosaic dispensation. And now I feel constrained to say—let any one, who would attempt to set aside this manifest design of the Apostle, show, if he can, what we are to understand by “**THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.**” And let it be well observed that the term “buried,” in

this connection, as a figure, “merely refers to the disposing of the dead body by performing the rites of sepulture,” without selecting any one of the various modes of performing it as practised by the different nations of the earth. These different modes we have already spoken of. But the body referred to,—this we have seen, in speaking on Rom. vi. 4-6,—is “*the body of the sins of the flesh.*” Doubtless you are now fully convinced, as all indeed must be who take the same rational way of making themselves acquainted with the meaning of the Holy Spirit in the passage,—that BAPTISM is “the CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST,”—that *both are spiritual*—the ONE GREAT WORK OF THE SPIRIT. On circumcision—see Rom. ii. 29. On baptism—1 Cor. xii. 13.

S. From what has been said, I see that baptism has been appointed in the room of circumcision,—that when baptism was appointed, the obligation to observe circumcision, as an outward rite, then ceased,—and that baptism, therefore, by the Apostle, is called the “circumcision of Christ.”

T. In this you are perfectly correct. The intelligent reader of the Scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament, knows that frequently the symbol is put for the substance, and the substance for the symbol,—hence, as we have seen, the Spirit’s work is called circumcision—the name of the initiatory rite of the Old Dispensation ; and again, by the

term baptism, the initiatory rite of the New Dispensation, the same thing is symbolized.

S. If my views are correct, and if I have not misunderstood what you have designed to convey to my mind upon this interesting subject, there is, as appears to me, great wisdom displayed in the selection of the symbols of both dispensations, which are so very significant and expressive of the end designed.

T. My young friend, the appointed rites of both dispensations are well calculated to symbolize what God, in his infinite wisdom designed; and we say also, "that the beautiful symmetry of the economy of Redemption is as fully preserved and developed by the symbols appointed under the New Testament dispensation as by those under the Old. Man is both *guilty* and *polluted*. His guilt must be pardoned, and his soul must be purified, or he must everlastingly perish. The blood of Christ alone can remove the guilt of sin; and the Spirit of God alone can remove its pollution, and subdue its reigning power. Consequently the Atonement of Christ, and the regenerating influence of the Spirit, are alike indispensable in the work of man's salvation. Both these essential facts were particularly symbolized by the two sacraments of the Old Testament.

S. From the manifest beautiful agreement and fitness of things presented to my mind I see that

the whole of the arrangement must be divine,—that the Passover, as applied by the Apostle himself, pointed to the sacrifice of the cross—“Christ our Passover, &c. ;” that Circumcision pointed to the soul’s new creation by the Holy Spirit, to which that term, as has been noticed, is applied by the same Apostle, and called the circumcision of Christ, “*made without hands* ;” that the Lord’s Supper, under the Gospel dispensation, likewise points to Calvary, and is designed, according to his own words, “*To show forth his death till he come,*” —while the baptismal water, whether applied by pouring, or sprinkling, scripturally points to the *active* or *cleansing* influences of the Spirit, as he comes down and sits as a refining fire upon the believing soul.

T. It must indeed be very gratifying to your parents and instructors to know that you have such perceptive powers as to see the great symmetry and beauty of revealed truth, which, to a mind like yours, must be,—bearing, as it manifestly does, heaven’s broad impress,—demonstrative evidence of its Divine origin.

S. I perceive that were we to admit that baptism,—be the mode what it may,—represents the burial and resurrection of Christ, we destroy at once that beautiful order and fitness of things which we have viewed as bearing the Divine impress, and leave—under a dispensation emphati-

cally his own—the *active* and *cleansing* operations of the Spirit without a symbol in the Church.

T. Entertaining as you do, such correct views, I will here inquire,—Would the Allwise God appoint no symbol to represent that which, according to Christ's own judgment upon the subject, would be more precious and consolatory to the Church than his bodily presence could be,—the *presence and work of the Spirit*?—or if he did appoint any ordinance,—and we know he did,—would he appoint one, in its own nature, far less impressive to the enlightened mind, and infinitely less expressive of that wisdom which is manifested in the beautiful order and fitness which we have viewed as heaven's own impress on the very face of an ordinance of heaven's own appointment? Is it reasonable to suppose this? Is it credible to believe it? Again, if the Spirit's work under the former dispensation was worthy of a sign and seal,—what are we to say of the fullness of his blessing under a dispensation, as you have properly expressed it, emphatically his own? Surely! surely!! the fuller and brighter beams, and deeper and broader tide, of blessed influences under the Gospel are not left without a proper sign and seal!!! To admit such a thing is to blot out the Divine impress which we have recognized, and to break off the index finger which points to the chief efficient agency employed in man's Salvation; and in fact, the only

agency that makes the great provisions of the everlasting covenant of Jehovah's mercy, available and sure. And shall we do all this? O! my soul! my soul!!—just think of it!—*to turn away our admiring eyes from the bright firmament of Gospel truth, and “seek refuge in a watery grave!!!”*

S. Has it not been frequently asserted, that the watery grave is highly symbolical and admonitory?

T. Yes; the watery grave has been represented as symbolical and admonitory of the burial and resurrection of Christ; but in reference to this, I would simply state, that the Christian Church has a weekly memorial, in the regular return of the Holy Sabbath, of the resurrection of Christ. As to his burial, you know that, that was no part of his work of obedience or suffering. Can any then be so entirely lost to sense or truth, as to suppose that the unavailing act of Joseph of Arimathea in disposing of the dead body of Jesus, was more worthy of a significant sign, than the soul-renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost! Believe me, my young friend, the workings of man's imaginings upon this, as upon other subjects, may throw the appearance of light around your path; but that, like an ignis fatuus, will, if followed, only tend to lead you astray; while the steady unwavering light of the Gospel sun, will direct thy feet in the straight course of changeless truth. The mo-

ment then we admit that the baptismal water is the Spirit's symbol, "the Gospel equilibrium is restored." Thank God! for truth!—pure heaven-born truth!!

S. Having given me full satisfaction in proving the fact,—that the terms we have just considered were applied by the Apostle to the Spirit's work,—I would inquire,—of what baptism does he speak, when he tells us—"There is *one Lord, one faith*, ONE BAPTISM?"

T. In this passage, which you will find in Eph. iv. 5, the Apostle, doubtless, refers here also to the work of the Holy Ghost, in the heart of the true believer. Could the Apostle,—having the fact in view, that there are different kinds of baptism spoken of in the New Testament,—mean to say, or mean others to understand, that there is, in every sense of the word, but one baptism? Certainly, he could not. But that he intended by the expression, to teach that there is but one saving in its nature, we can have no doubt. "*One Lord, i. e. ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD*,—yet lords many;—"*one faith*"—ONE LIVING, SAVING FAITH, yet different kinds of faith,—the dead faith of both devils and men (James ii. 19;)—"One baptism,"—ONE SAVING BAPTISM, yet baptisms many,—the baptism of water, the baptism of the Spirit, and the baptism of suffering. With this, we shall take in connection the words of John,—"*I, indeed, baptize*

you *with water* ; *He* that cometh after me, shall baptize you *with the Holy Ghost*,"—and then inquire—to which of these baptisms could St. Paul refer when he said,—“ *One baptism ?*” Could he pass by the baptism of Christ,—a baptism by the Holy Ghost,—the one to which John directed the attention of his disciples, and fix upon John’s inferior one ?—or could he even refer to what Christ commanded his disciples to administer ? We shall hear the Apostle himself upon the subject,—“ *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.*”—1 Cor. xii. 13.

S. Does not the same Apostle say,—“ I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and that all passed through the sea ?”—1 Cor. x. 1—3.

T. Yes ; and I think the words which you have so correctly quoted, will make much in favor of the doctrine we have been advocating.

S. If I mistake not, some bring forward this very passage in favor of immersion.

T. Frequently has it been dragged in for this purpose ; but, like many other texts which have been so treated, has failed to accomplish the end for which it has been thus applied. Now, before it can answer this object, two things must be proved,—first, that to *pass over* a river *dry shod*, is to be *immersed* in it ;—secondly, that the re-

moval of the cloud from the front to the rear of the Israelitish army is expressive of that mode.

S. Is there anything in this passage to support the mode of our choice,—*pouring*, or *sprinkling*?

T. From what Moses has said on the subject, and as quoted by St. Paul, we have no positive proof that that baptism was by sprinkling, or pouring, at least it is not so written; yet the statements made by the inspired writer, are *all against immersion*, and *in favor of the former mode*. But what Moses has omitted in the particulars relating to Israel's passage through the sea, Asaph, in Ps. lxxvii. has given us in detail,—“The waters saw thee, O God; the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled, *the clouds poured out water*; the skies sent out a sound. Thine arrows also went abroad; the voice of thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Thy way was in the sea, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known. Thou ledest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” Here, then, we have the very mode of the baptism spoken of by St. Paul brought before us. From this particular account we learn, that while the Israelites passed through the sea, “*the clouds poured out water*.” This, you perceive, justifies the Apostle in the declaration,—“And were all baptized in,”—properly rendered, *by*,—

“the cloud, and in the sea.” This leads us to consider two things.—First, the *local* situation of the Israelites at that time,—the bed of the sea.—Secondly, the *means* by which they were baptized when in that situation,—“*The clouds poured out water.*”

S. Does not St. Paul tell us that we are saved by baptism, as Noah and his family were saved by water?

T. There is something similar to what you say in 1 Pet. iii. 21,—“*The like figure* whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” From the phraseology here employed, it is plain that the Apostle’s intention was to teach the *design*, and *not the mode* of baptism. But were we to admit that it refers to the mode, then it is plain that that mode cannot be immersion. “The ark was not *immersed* in the water; had it been, they must all have perished; but it was *borne upon the water*, and *sprinkled* with the *rain* that fell from heaven.” The Apostle having declared that Noah and his family were “*saved by water*,” (verse 20,) goes on to state,—“*The like figure* whereunto even baptism doth also *now* save us.” By this we are informed that Noah’s temporal deliverance by water was a figure of some other salvation,—*salvation by Christ*. Noah, we

see then, was saved.—But from what? He was saved, not only from the *grief* of listening to the “hard speeches” of the infidels of his day, as well as that which resulted from beholding “their unlawful deeds;” but, above all,—they having, most likely, as hardened sinners, premeditated his death,—he was saved by water, from their murderous designs. We learn, then, from this passage that that which was the means of their *destruction* was the means of his *salvation*; but let it be observed that though, in the *destruction* of the one, and the *baptism* of the other, the element employed was the same, the *MODES were widely different*. The enemies of Noah, as we have seen, were destroyed by being immersed in the general flood; but had Noah been immersed with the rest, with them he must have perished.—This, you know, was not the case,—“The ark was borne upon the water,” while the clouds *poured out*, in copious showers, their full contents. Can we then suppose that the Allwise God would have baptism so administered as to be a mere figure of destruction, but not of salvation?—or that he would appoint such a mode to be observed by his Church as is not only very inconvenient, but sadly defective, forasmuch as it does not represent the *active* and *cleansing* influences of the Holy Ghost, which it was designed as a standing ordinance, under the Gospel dispensation, to symbolize?

S. I plainly see that this would not well accord with the words of St. Peter which you have quoted, and which represent baptism as a figure of salvation.

T. It affords me much pleasure to know that you perceive the great impropriety—if not impiety—of administering the ordinance in a way, to say the least, that will not harmonize with the words of the Apostle on the subject, especially so, when taken in the connection in which he has placed them,—“The *like figure*,”—referring to Noah’s deliverance as a figure of salvation,—“whereunto *even baptism doth also now save us.*” The Apostle, you will observe, in these words, speaks of two figures,—the first is Noah’s baptism in the ark—a baptism which was a figure of salvation by Christ.—The second is Christian baptism, which is represented as a figure like unto the former.—“The *like figure*, whereunto *even baptism doth also now save us ;*” *i. e.*, as a figure of the very same,—salvation by Christ—which Noah’s temporal deliverance symbolized. We are then, as you see, justified in saying, that “it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.”—And let it never be forgotten that this inward grace—the thing typified—leads to righteousness of life—to the keeping of our garments unspotted from the flesh, and has its natural concomitant,—that which

no application of water can give,—“ *The answer of a good conscience.*”

It is now, my young friend, to be hoped,—having so far gone through the principal texts that relate to the mode of baptism,—that you are immovably fixed, in relation to this, as well as all other Christian doctrines, on the firm basis of Gospel truth.

S. If I can judge of the deep convictions of my own mind, as to the mode of baptism, which have put all doubts to flight, I can, at least, say—that the various arts of sophistry and trickery which have too often disturbed the weak and uninformed, shall, I trust, never shake my faith.

T. Glad am I to listen to the tone of firmness, with which you express your sentiments, and do hope that the mere ebullition of the passions may never gain the ascendancy over your enlightened judgment.

S. I can assure you that I never wish to have my passions excited upon this subject, especially by any dogmatical assertions that may be made to vindicate a mode which manifestly sins by defect ; and do believe, that I never shall, as long as I rely upon the truth of the doctrine advanced by St. Paul in these words ;—“ For in Christ Jesus neither *circumcision* availeth anything, nor *uncircumcision*, but a NEW CREATURE.” “ *And as many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*”—Gal. vi. 15, 16.

T. It is highly gratifying to find that you are so well acquainted with the Scriptures, and that you discern, as appears, from the passage you have quoted, where the Apostle has laid the *only stress*. I would, with all my heart, advise you to abide by this, and then, most assuredly, you shall share in the peace and mercy, which the Apostle prays may rest upon those who are so characterized. As long as this principle is deeply engraven in your heart and kept before your mind, there is no fear of your being drawn away by those who foolishly spend a great portion of their precious time in attempts to prove that it is necessary that they should put your body under some water ; to you, in such a case, the whole,—and we trust the time is not far distant when it will be so with all,—will pass off in mere empty evaporation.

Think again of the fundamental principle brought forward by the Apostle,—“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” This principle then, we presume, is designed to have its practical influence on the members of the Church, and if it has an influence as great as the subject itself demands, the members who act under that influence, far from spending their zeal in support of non-essentials, “will spend, and be spent,” for the maintenance and universal influence of the great doctrine advanced by St. Paul.—“Neither *circum-*

cision availeth anything, nor *uncircumcision*, but a **NEW CREATURE.**" The great Apostle of the Gentiles had a much better method of teaching than many in this, our day, have ; he saw what, in doctrine, was most important, and to that he gave prominence in his discourses. Of this, as a truth, the words just noticed, are full in proof ; hence it follows, that they who live according to the doctrine taught in the passage are Christians of the primitive stamp, and must, consequently, enjoy the rich blessing the Apostle speaks of as connected with, and inseparable from the experience of all who " worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh."—"As many then," he goes on to say, "as walk according to this rule,"—mark !—not as many as are led by mere excitement ; but as many as cordially embrace the doctrine as contained in the unalterable law of admission into the Kingdom of God, or Church of Christ on earth, and with which the words of St. Paul, of which we have spoken, are in perfect accordance,—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God,”—“peace shall be on them,” &c.

You have learned from what has been advanced in the preceding pages, that John's baptism was administered under the law,—before the ceremonial was abolished,—but that the *Christian* was not instituted till after John was no longer a probationer on earth, and Christ arose from the dead. The

Apostles, as you, probably, have observed, went forth and acted upon the commission they had received from Christ. When that commission was given, the heathen world lay before them, and into it they entered, baptizing all that believed the truth they were commissioned to proclaim,—that turned from their gods many to the one living and true God. These they formed into proper organized churches; and to these, in their absence, they directed a series of letters, or what are called epistles, in which—be it well remarked—they scarcely notice, and never dwell upon the subject of water baptism, while that of the Spirit is never lost sight of. The reason is obvious—they had to leave space sufficient to give prominence to the more important matter; and it must forcibly strike you that the example of some calling themselves Gospel ministers, forms, to that of the Apostles, a striking contrast. You should understand that the Visible Church has been erected for the express purpose that there, in the use of divinely appointed means, souls may be converted to God. Into this, as a school, by being baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, both old and young were to be admitted, and there taught in all the fundamental principles of saving truth,—“*Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.*” This, then, being once done, the Apostle could not find it necessary to harp continually upon the sub-

ject of water baptism ; but from a love to, and care for the souls of men, they felt it to be their duty to enforce upon the initiated, as well as upon all, the necessity of the Spirit's baptism, in order to an entrance into what may be called the inward spiritual church, or to their becoming "living stones, built up a spiritual temple, an holy habitation of God through the Spirit."

You will remember that we have spoken of the baptismal water as being designed to represent the great work of the Spirit ; while the bread and wine in the Christian Eucharist, is to symbolize the broken body and shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have seen that the baptism which is without hands, is by an out-pouring, or descent of the Spirit ; but as you have had, in the preceding pages, only a few of the Scriptural expressions confirmatory of that truth, I will here present you with a few more in order.—"SENT FROM ON HIGH," Luke xxiv. 29. "DESCENDING," John i. 32. "COMING UPON THEM," Acts ii. 8. "POUR OUT," Acts ii. 17. "SHED FORTH," Acts ii. 33. "FALLEN UPON," Acts viii. 16. "FELL ON," Acts x. 44. "CAME ON," Acts xix. 6. If it is as here represented, that the soul, by the Holy Spirit, is baptized, and enters the inward or Spiritual Church— is it not more reasonable to suppose that the outward baptism, by which we enter the outer court, should represent the thing intended to be

symbolized, than that it should, as a divinely instituted rite, contradict it? Most assuredly it is; and if you understand these things aright, it is not at all likely that your mind will be disturbed by the foolishness of men, who might be much better employed than by going about, as they do, to lead the simple from the sound principles of truth, to what, in reality, is no better, for the benefit of youth, than “old wives fables.” What can we think of the individual who has no other object in view, in acting the part of the importunate widow, with those who have been sprinkled in the morning of life, than to prevail with them to be re-baptized—and so importunate too, as if they believed the whole of religion consisted in, what, to us, is manifestly discordant with the very thing the ordinance is intended to represent? It may, however, be said that there is no re-baptism in such a case; for the first baptism so-called, is no baptism. Well, indeed, is it for us that this uncharitable and unchurching tribunal is not the only standard of judgment: for, we have had, and still can have a successful appeal to the standard of immutable truth—the Revelation of God—the *only living speaking tribunal from which, in matters of faith and religion, there is no appeal*. Truth is mighty, and will prevail.

S. It is objected that the term baptism, when applied to the work of the Spirit in the heart of the

believer is used figuratively ; and that, therefore, the meaning of that term is not to be determined by its figurative use. Now, as our opponents would thus endeavor to get rid of the argument drawn from the analogous representation of the Spirit's baptism by the baptismal water, I wish, if still agreeable to you, to hear what can be said in reply.

T. Just with as much pleasure, my young friend, as when you first expressed a desire to understand the proper mode of water baptism, I will notice the objection of which you speak. It is well to consider the principal objections that antipedobaptists have raised against our mode, and to display their weakness in the light of truth.

The term figure, then, in theology, means a type,—hence when speaking of the baptism of water,—we say it is to typify, or represent, the baptism of the Spirit. Now, let it be well observed, that the figurative language of the New Testament in reference to the operations of the Spirit, such as “*filled with breathing, blowing, shining, anointing, &c.*”—terms our opponents frequently quote to prove, if possible, that there can be no analogy between the baptism of the Spirit, and that of water,—is in perfect accordance with our views. The expression—“*filled with the Spirit,*” does not only suppose the descent of the Spirit ; but also refers to the greater measure of his influence and

grace to be enjoyed under his own peculiar dispensation :—" *Breathing*" also supposes that the life-giving Spirit is come down to quicken and give life to the dead ;—" *Blowing*," as a scriptural phrase, has reference to the *mystery* of his sensible work on the believing soul. (John iii. 8.) "*Shining*" is a term that relates to his office as *Enlightener* and not that of Sanctifier. And here, I would just say, the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper were not designed to represent all particulars respecting the death of Christ which took place upon the cross and elevated upon a mount, &c. ; but simply to prefigure his broken body and shed blood ;—so, likewise, baptism by sprinkling or pouring, is not designed to represent the Spirit's work of conviction, or enlightening, or even the mystery connected with it, to which the term "*blowing*" has reference ; but especially is it designed, as has been shown, to point to his *active* operation and *sanctifying* influences.

S. If I mistake not, you have omitted to say any thing upon the word—" *anoint*," or "*anointing*,"—Will you please, therefore, to show me how it is turned aside as a ground of objection against the analogy of which you speak ?

T. In order to understand the thing as you ought, it is necessary that your attention be directed to that from which the figurative expression before us is taken. It has its literal application also,—

hence the Scriptures speak of an “holy anointing,” (Exodus xxx. 30--33,) by which the priests were consecrated to the service of God. This anointing was performed by pouring the oil upon the head of the candidate. Now it is from this that the term “anointing” is taken, when applied to the work of the Spirit upon the believing soul, (1 John ii. 27,) and of course, the latter as well as the former is by an outpouring. You will have observed, that in all the figurative terms considered,—selected as they are by our opponents,—the Spirit is represented as *active*, and the question, therefore, at issue, turns on the *mode*, and so the point of resemblance is found in the *descent*, or *application* of water.

S. I am satisfied, heartily satisfied ! with what you have said and proved ; and feel settled in the belief that the Scriptures of truth fully bear us out in our views of the simple but significant ordinance of baptism.

T. May you ever rest in such consistent and harmonious views of Gospel truth. By doing so, you can never be tempted to the sin or folly of being re-baptized. Being, then, as we are, introduced, by water baptism, into the Visible Church—what can be gained by a second introduction that is not and may not be enjoyed by the first ? To say the least, you may lose but cannot gain. By it “you come forth upon the world, not so much

to make a covenant already made for you, with your parents, by your God and Saviour. Your language will be,—I do not believe that God made a covenant with my parents for me. But if he did, as we believe, you may put a stop to the blessings of that covenant and to the answers of the prayers made for you by pious parents and the Church at your baptism;—prayers yet waiting to be fulfilled in blessings upon you and yours to many generations.”

If then you have been baptized by sprinkling, or pouring, in the morning of life, or at a more advanced period, earnestly seek, if you have not yet received, the thing signified,—the baptism of the Spirit; but if, by this, you are now a living stone in the spiritual temple, continually aspire after a greater measure of the varied fulness of Christ, that you may, with the “hundred and forty and four thousand,” stand upon the great Mount Sion above.

In speaking on the subject of baptism, you have, probably, observed a kind of climax, by which the soul rises, as to privilege and enjoyment, and by which is displayed before the mind, as a wise, beautiful, and benevolent arrangement, the wisdom and goodness of God. By the *outward* baptism we enter the outer court—by the *inward* baptism—that of the Spirit—the inner court; and by the baptism of suffering, by which we put off “the

outer man," we enter into the holy of holies—the place of glorious vision above. Be then faithful to the privileges you now enjoy, by having entered, through the baptismal water, the Visible Church, and you will soon be let into communion with God, where, if constant and ardent in thy devotions, thy favored soul shall be so fully changed into the moral likeness of him with whom it communes, as to be meet, at length, "for the inheritance of the saints in light." AMEN.

THE SUBJECTS.

SCHOLAR. Who are fit subjects for water baptism ?

TEACHER. *All children of believers, as well as penitent adults, who have not been baptized.*

S. Is there any thing in the Scriptures to justify the admission of children to the ordinance ?

T. Yes ; and by a candid appeal to the law and to the testimony, we justify the practice.

S. I would like to hear what scriptures can be adduced in its support.

T. It is right that you should express such a desire, and I will, therefore, in this respect, gratify you, by calling your attention to what the New Testament says upon the subject. The first passage, to which I call you attention—one that forms a ground work for what may follow—you will find in Rom. v. 18,—“ As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

S. How does this text bear upon the subject, as there is no mention made of children in it ?

T. Very true ; in the passage, there is nothing

expressly said of children ; yet they must be implied in it, or else they never came into condemnation. The passage contains two propositions. The first is—“ *By the offence of one judgment came upon all men.*” Here, I presume, it will be taken for granted, that children are included in the general condemnation, otherwise they are found in a state of perfect innocence, and are, therefore,—independent of the “free gift,” of course,—*legally* justified, and *are fit for the kingdom of heaven.* The second proposition reads thus,—“ *By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*” There is, you perceive, no mention made of children in this, any more than in the former part of the sentence ; yet, who that believes children to be *included in the general condemnation*, can suppose them to be *excluded from all benefit in the general reconciliation of our species?* If all children were virtually included in Adam after he fell, were they not federally related to Christ, through whom—to render their actual existence possible—Adam was reprieved? If infants are—before they have done good or evil—the purchase of the Saviour’s blood, they are his ; if so they cannot belong to the world, nor its god ; if not, then they belong to the Church—the kingdom of God—and, therefore, ought to be admitted, and if admitted, they must be baptized. Our opponents are forced to admit this. “Let it

be proved," says Dr. Gill, "that infants are, or ought to be members of Gospel churches, and we are ready to admit them."

S. Are there any other passages in favor of infant baptism?

T. Yes; there are others equally strong. The first text we shall here notice is, (Acts ii. 39,)—"For the promise is unto you and to your *children*, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Children, then, you see, are included in the promise.

S. May I inquire to what promise does the Apostle, in the passage, refer?

T. It is right that you should be particular in your inquiries, and for your satisfaction I will just now say, that the Apostle, doubtless, had reference to the promise made to Abraham, (Acts iii. 25,)—"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xvii. 7.) "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

S. But though children are spoken of in Acts ii. 39, I find nothing of baptism there.

T. True; there is no mention made of baptism in the passage to which you have referred; yet, by

a reference to the preceding verse, (38) you will find that is given as a reason why they should be baptized. Read the whole in the order in which it is presented, — “Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ;”— here, we have the reason,—“For the promise is unto you, and to your children,” etc.

S. Are we then to suppose that the Abrahamic covenant is still in force ?

T. Undoubtedly we should so understand it ; and were it otherwise, the Apostle would not have applied the promise that was made to Abraham, as belonging to those who were assembled at Jerusalem, on the Day of Pentecost. “The law,” says the Apostle, “which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect.”—Gal. iii. 17. Can we then suppose that the Gospel, with its universal benevolence, which has succeeded, should ever be designed, by him who gave it, to revoke, or disannul the promises, which, for the spiritual benefit of children, preceded the law ? The great Apostle of the Gentiles speaks out his mind upon the subject.—“The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed.”—Gal. iii. 8.

S. Could the persons addressed by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost suppose that he called *them* and their *children* to receive the ordinance of baptism?

T. Yes ; and, with them, it must have been more than a supposition ; at least, with the Jews and proselytes who were among that mixed assembly—these had been long in the habit of having their minds called to the promise to which the Apostle referred, and on the ground of which they recognized the children's right of admission, by circumcision, into the Church of God. Could St. Peter, then, have intended it to be understood, or the Jews assembled on that occasion received it in any other sense, when he addressed them by saying — “ *The promise is unto you and to your CHILDREN !* ” It could not be ! Did you ever know our Baptist brethren to address a congregation in this way ? I think not ; and if they were to practice the thing—to show in this respect we are mistaken—it would not accord with their avowed principles. Mr. Edwards, in speaking of the Jews, says, “ If their practice of receiving infants was founded on a promise exactly similar, as it certainly was, how could they possibly have understood him, but as meaning the same thing since himself used the same mode of speech ? This must have been the case, unless we admit this absurdity, that they understood him in a sense to which they were

never accustomed." In both places the ordinance is made to result from the promise—the one is set down as a reason for the other.—Gen. xvii. 9. "*Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore ;*" that is, because God had given a promise. So here, "*Repent, and let every one of you,*" of yours, "*be baptized ;*" FOR (because) the promise is to you and your children. From what has been thus advanced it is evident that infants are as fit subjects for baptism now, as they were formerly for circumcision ; otherwise, the Apostle is represented as devoid of common sense in saying "*The promise is to you*" whom I now, as adults, call to repentance, "*therefore, be baptized.*" The promise is not to you only *but also to YOUR CHILDREN*, therefore, they *must not* be baptized. Now, to say the least, the Apostle could not, so illogically, come to such a conclusion. Here, then, we have not only no reason for excluding children from, but the very same reason, as that under the law, for their admission into the Visible Church.

S. I must confess, my former views upon this subject were rather confused, but now I understand it much better.

T. Be thankful, my young friend, that your confused views, in this respect, have, by the light of truth, given place to such as are less confused ; for the better you understand the subject the more you will admire the goodness of God as manifested in

his care for the children of our trust, whose juvenile state was represented, by the "*child born*" and "*Son given*."

S. Are there any other passages that countenance the admission of children into the Visible Church?

T. Yes; in Luke xviii. 16, we read thus,—
"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for such is the kingdom of God," or as rendered by Dr. A. Clarke,—"*The kingdom of heaven is composed of such.*" That the children here spoken of were infants and not young converts is put, by the fifteenth verse, beyond all successful contradiction,—"*And they brought unto him also INFANTS.*" *These then belong to the kingdom of Christ*—THE CHURCH OF GOD!

S. I should like to hear you speak a little upon the term—"kingdom of God."

T. In complying with your, to me, pleasing request, I must necessarily be as brief as possible. The term, then, "kingdom of God," as contained in the New Testament, is generally applied in a two-fold sense—to the suffering church on earth, and the glorified church in heaven. It follows, therefore, that in one of these senses the term, in the passage before us, is applied :—If the former—then it refers either to the outer, or inner court—the visible, or inward spiritual church. Should we say the *visible*, then, doubtless, the children,

which Christ took up in his arms, had been already admitted by circumcision, as Christ himself was, into the only Church of God then on earth. But if Jesus intended by the term—"kingdom of God"—his spiritual church below, and if this, in part, as we believe, is composed of infants, then "*the free gift*" has come upon them, and therefore ought to have the sign of that kingdom of which they are recognized as members. Again, on the other hand, if by that term our Lord meant *the kingdom of glory*—then, it follows, if they are fit for the place of glorious vision, they are assuredly fit for any church on earth. "*No soul living,*" says Dr. A. Clarke, "*can prove that they CANNOT be* (by baptism) benefited. Though *little* children, they are capable of receiving Christ's blessing. If he embraced them, should not his church embrace them?"

S. But is there any command for this ?

T. In the New Testament there is no positive command for the admission of children into the church of God, and, simply so, because not necessary ; had it been necessary it would have been given. It is a fact which no one who believes the Bible will attempt to dispute, viz., that the church, by Divine authority, once embraced children ; and that this was sanctioned by Christ, when upon earth, is alike indisputable ; nor can it be denied, on scriptural principles, that this was a privilege

which conferred much benefit on both parents and children. Can we for one moment suppose that it is the work of the last, and only perfect dispensation to abridge the privileges of whole households—the children's, by denying them admission—the parents', by depriving them of the gracious favor of presenting their own immortal offspring for the holy ordinance of admission into the Visible Church, and thus prevent each party from being publicly laid, as they ought, under an obligation to fulfill their duty.

S. May I ask, is there any command to prevent the recognition of juvenile membership by the Christian Church?

T. No; not one to that effect. We have already seen that it was the custom to admit children, by Divine appointment, into the Jewish church, and that there was nothing in the conduct of Christ to discountenance it; but, on the contrary—his example—circumcised the eighth day—his Spirit manifested towards, and his treatment of the little ones, all, all! proclaim his will concerning them, and which was well understood and expressed by St. Peter when he said, “The promise is to *you* and *your children*.”

S. Why then do some Christian ministers refuse to baptize them?

T. It is not because God has no care for them,—nor that their admission into the church was at

any time prohibited or discountenanced by Christ,—nor that they have no interest in the covenant of grace—nor that it was never customary to recognize their interest in that covenant, by their admission into the church—nor yet, is it because there is a command to prevent it.

S. Why then is it so?

T. The principal objection they urge against the precious privilege of children, is this—“We find, they say, no plain command in the New Testament to baptize them; for if Christ had said, in plain terms, that it was his will and pleasure that children should be baptized, then we would administer the ordinance to them.” This objection may, to some, appear plausible; but, notwithstanding, it is very weak, and displays very great ignorance, from the fact, that such a declaration as is required was not at all necessary to show us the will of God respecting the young immortals committed to our trust, and, therefore, we must continue to offer them up, “in thankful hands,” to the Father of all, until a Divine command, or prohibitory clause is pointed out as abridging, in this respect, our privileges. *But this never has, and NEVER CAN BE DONE!* And why?—simply, because there is no such clause either in “*the law or testimony*”—nor yet is there any thing that can possibly be discovered, however strict the scrutiny—in the spirit of the glorious Gospel of Christ to condemn

us for holding to what the church, even from the Apostolic age, has proved to be of great benefit ; it follows, therefore, that in this, *we are justified*, not only by the universal and continued example of the church ; *but above all, by that from which there can be no appeal to a higher judgment* — THE WORD OF GOD.

S. But is it not written, (Matt. xvi. 16,) — “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned ?” Does it not, therefore, follow that children are not to be baptized because they cannot believe ?

T. No ; the construction of the passage will not admit of such an inference ; for this would damn, at once, all infants on the ground of their inability to believe.

S. How does it lead to such a dreadful conclusion ?

T. Plainly thus, — “He that believeth not shall be damned,” — hence it follows — by such a mode of reasoning — that as children cannot believe, therefore they must be damned. You see then the inference is as shocking as it is unscriptural, and, therefore, the mode of reasoning that leads to it is altogether erroneous. This is evident from the fact, that this passage — strangely forced, to cut off infants from baptism — solely belongs to adults, of whom faith is required as a term of salvation ; but certainly not of infants, either as a condition of

salvation or baptism, because both may take place on the ground of the free gift.”—Rom. v. 18.

S. I see then, that we may reasonably conclude that if a child without either repentance or faith can be saved, they may, of course, without either, be baptized.

T. Just so; if they are fit for the one, they are, most assuredly, fit for the other also.

S. It strikes me forcibly, that the objection now raised against infant baptism might have been raised, by some captious Jews, against infant circumcision.

T. It is quite manifest—whatever others may say, or think upon the subject—that there is a striking analogy. This will be seen, if you bear in mind the fact—that Abraham, an adult, received circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith; (Rom. vi. 11;) for “Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. (verse 3.) The argument then, by the Jewish objector, may be represented thus.—“Children cannot believe as Abraham our father did, therefore they ought not to be circumcised.” Now we know that children were circumcised, though they could not believe, nor understand the nature of the rite; and should an objector still enquire—“What profit in circumcision?”—he is met

by the Apostle's laconic reply—"MUCH EVERY WAY."

S. Are there any other passages in favor of the right of children to the seal of the covenant?

T. Yes; in 1 Cor. vii. 15, we are informed that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." They are reputed as such on account of his, or her Christian faith. Though one should be a Christian and the other remain a heathen, yet, being by marriage one flesh, the sanctity of the one, as to outward things, may be imputed to the other so as to afford their children the privilege of baptism. "No child," says Tertullian, "among the heathen, was born in a state of purity; and it is not to be wondered at that demons possessed them from their youth, seeing they were early dedicated to their service." To this, he thinks, the Apostle has reference when he says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by his wife: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy,"—they are now, by baptism, dedicated to God. Blessed ordinance!—How strictly ought the Church to attend to it!

S. But how is it ascertained that this is the proper meaning of the passage?

T. That we have not misunderstood the Apostle in the passage before us, we learn from the

words employed by him, and given in answer to the question put by the Corinthians respecting husbands or wives who became Christians after marriage, as well as from the fact, that it cannot—according to the analogy of faith—admit of a different interpretation. “The Jews,” says Dr. A. Clarke, “considered a child as born *out of holiness* whose parents were not proselytes at the time of the birth, though afterwards they became proselytes. On the other hand, they considered the children of heathens *born in holiness*, provided the parents became proselytes *before* the birth. All children of the heathen were reputed *unclean* by the Jews ; and all their own children *holy*.” These statements certainly illustrate the passage.

S. Have not some endeavored to maintain that the word “ holy ” here means legitimate ?

T. Yes ; but without any portion of revelation to support it. On the other hand, Mr. Baxter has shown that there are not less than *six hundred* places in the Bible where the very same word signifies *a separation to God*.

S. It certainly is quite evident that the word of God contains much more in favor of infant baptism than is generally supposed.

T. And would it not be surpassing strange if it were not so, since children participate in the benefits flowing from the general reconciliation of

our species, and are destined, in common with ourselves, to live forever.

S. May it not be said, that the very same reason that justifies the baptism of children is found to exist in the case of the unbelieving husband, who is one flesh with the believing wife?

T. It may indeed be so said; but after all it will be found that the same reason does not exist for the admission of the unbelieving husband into the visible church, as for that of the children; because, as we have seen, the adults who had not been baptized were required to repent and believe in order to their being admitted to that ordinance; while children, without either repentance or faith—in consequence of one of the parents having become a Christian—were presented to the Church in order to receive the seal of the covenant in which they are mercifully included.

S. Have we anything in the language of the Apostles, in any part of their epistles that can make us confidently believe that children were members of Apostolic Churches?

T. Yes; we have sufficient to satisfy the reasonable who will consider the subject calmly. I will now call your attention to Ephesians vi. 1.—Col. iii. 26, which read as follows, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.*”—“*Children, obey your parents in all things.*”

From these passages we do not only learn that children were members of Apostolic Churches; but, likewise, that the juveniles addressed were of tender years; for they were to be *entirely* subject to the control of their parents. On no other supposition can we, rationally, account for the peculiar language of the Apostle. Think of it again—"CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS IN ALL THINGS." You see they are called children—*children that in all things were subject to their Christian parents*. Let those *who can*, suppose this language more applicable to the *self-governed*, than to those *in a state of non-age*.

S. Does it not appear that their non-age was not such as to prevent their admission into the Church?

T. Most readily, my young friend, do we assent to the truth; but though it did not prevent their admission into the Church, yet it was such as to render them, in the estimation of the Apostle, incapable of judging for themselves, and *which made it necessary that the parent's will should be their law*.

S. Have we anything to prove that these children were baptized?

T. The thing of which you inquire, will not require much effort to make manifest; for if it does not appear on the very face of the passage before

us like a self-evident truth, it will come forth with irresistible force, by fair inference. That they were addressed as members of the Church at Colosse, none, I presume, will deny; while it must be admitted that the only divinely appointed mode of induction, into the visible church of Christ, is by water-baptism.—If so, then it follows, *they were baptized*, and that, too, on the parent's faith, to whom, "*in all things,*" *they were to be subject*. Now if children, say at six, or even ten years of age, were formerly—through the faith of the parents, dedicated to the service of God,—*how much more should infants!*

S. I acknowledge, with, I trust, some degree of gratitude, that your explanations of texts adduced,—for and against, together with the mode of reasoning you have adopted in support of our views,—have made me understand the subject much better than before.

T. It is right that you should understand, and be deeply grounded in a doctrine so scripturally supported, and one in which, as a young immortal, you ought to feel yourself deeply interested.

S. Have we now gone over all the texts that bear upon this subject?

T. No; there is a class of texts that relate to *household baptisms*. The first to which I call your attention, you will find in Acts xvi. 15. "And

when she was baptized, and her *household*, she besought," etc. Here, then, in the case of Lydia and her *family*—her *children*, as the word means, we have an example almost, at least, equivalent to a command. *Lydia and her family were baptized.* Can we then suppose that the Apostles would have baptized children, if they had no authority for so doing? NO!—and if they did practice infant baptism,—and we have sufficient evidence to believe that they did,—*then had they divine authority for the practice.*

S. Presuming that you will not be offended for my being so inquisitive, as my object is to gain information, I ask, how is it proved that the word *household*, when applied to persons, has such a definite meaning as that which you have given?

T. Proceeding, with all cheerfulness, to give what information I can, as to the precise meaning of the word to which your question relates—I would just say that the Apostle has so applied it, as to include children; besides, the Syriac version has it thus—"The children of her house were baptized; which shows, at least, that, in those early times, children were deemed such parts of a household as were baptized." This version is considered to be of Apostolic antiquity, and, of course, with the reasonable, will tend to silence every doubt. With such plain statements of a

well authenticated fact before your mind, you dare not attempt, were it even possible, to work yourself, or even permit others to lead you into the false belief—false it is,—that the term house, or household,—whole houses—when applied to persons, does not include children. For if what we have considered does not amount to *proof positive*, which, to me, is very satisfactory, you will see, at least, on what side of the question *the ground of probability lies*.

S. I see clearly, that our present version of the Holy Scriptures, though, in some respects considered somewhat incorrect—not materially so, as touching graver matters—yet, nevertheless, with all the advantage taken of those few errors by our opponents, there is still sufficient truth contained in the various passages you have noticed, fully to substantiate the doctrine you have advanced, and of course, to overthrow all the sophisms which our sincere Baptist brethren have, or may yet advance in support of their theory,

T. The fact to which you have referred, cannot be successfully contradicted. The present translation of the New Testament, does, indeed—and what would it be if a little better translated, at least, those parts of it that chiefly relate to the points we have considered—sufficiently uphold us in our views.

S. Having scripturally and satisfactorily answered the questions I have proposed, I feel encouraged to inquire,—Are there any other parts of the New Testament that speak of household baptisms !

T. Yes ; we have the case of the jailer, Acts xvi. 33.—“ And he took them the *same* hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, *he and all his* STRAITWAY.” From this we learn that the children were baptized upon the faith of their parents. Observe, the Apostles addressed themselves personally to the trembling jailer, by saying—“ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*” Having, then believed, *he* was baptized, and *all his straitway,*” —forthwith—all his house, all his children, his little ones, as the word means, when applied to persons.

If, then, the members of this family had arrived to manhood, and the carnal mind in them had grown still more inveterate through unrestrained crime, could these inspired men, under such circumstances, address the head thereof by saying, “ *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and* THY HOUSE.” Or could an enlightened Christian Missionary, on Christian principles, thus address the head of a heathen family, every branch of which having grown up to maturity, and

confirmed in the principles and practice of heathenism? No, indeed, it is too unreasonable to admit the supposition, and quite too incredible for our faith to receive it.

S. Have you gone through the whole of that class of texts which relates to the baptism of households?

T. No; there are not less than twelve Christian families spoken of, in the New Testament, who all doubtless, received Christian baptism; but be this as it may, there are five of that number—I think the fact must be conceded to us—to whom the ordinance was administered. At present, however, we shall content ourselves by a reference to the baptism of the (family) of Stephanas, as recorded in 1 Cor. i. 16, “I baptized,” said the Apostle, “the *household* family of Stephanas.” And let it here be well observed, *that there is no instance, on the record, of the heads of families being baptized where the household has not been baptized also.* This family is spoken of as “*the first-fruits*” of Achaia, 1 Cor. xvi., 15; and we are informed that here this church was planted at the commencement of the Apostle’s ministry, when Gallio was deputy of Achaia, Acts xviii. 9, 12; and when we take into consideration the period of the Apostle’s arrival there, which, by chronologists, is fixed in the summer of the year 51, together with the date of the

epistle directed to that church, which was in the year 57, giving us a period of six years, or more, that elapsed from the time of their baptism, to the writing of the epistle that speaks of their Christian services—services to which some refer as full proof that they could not have been children when they were baptized ; but which supposed proof is brought forth, as you will perceive, by confounding the time of their baptism with the date of the epistle.—Again, when we take into consideration, with what has been advanced, the fact, that the services spoken of, and on which our mistaken brethren lay so much stress, have reference in particular to Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus—the connection of the passage itself will prove—the usual objection raised on this ground against the admission of the younger branches of that family, or household, into the church at Achaia, by the application of the sign and the seal of the covenant that previously included them, *must fall, “like the baseless fabric of a vision.”*

S. Well, I do rejoice to know, after all that has been said against the baptism of juveniles, that there is so much in the “*Book of books*” to prove the children’s right to the simple but significant ordinance.

T. Thankful am I that anything which may have been advanced, on my part, should have any

tendency to confirm you in the belief of a practice that is precious to many of the wisest and holiest of Christians.

S. Truly, I do view the subject in a very different light from what I have done, having been—I see it now—foolishly disturbed by the zealous endeavors of some who were addicted to ridicule the idea of infant baptism.

T. My young friend, it is to be hoped that you will learn how to pity the weakness and folly of those who strive to exalt a religious rite above its intended end, and who plainly show,—if action speaks,—that they, in reality, do so. This is made manifest by their constant endeavors, to draw, and tease, not only those who belong to the world; but also pious members of other churches, into compliance with their mode.

S. I see clearly, that as I have been introduced, by water baptism, into the visible church of Christ, it is my happy privilege—if I sustain the character of a true penitent, or justified believer—to approach the Supper of my Lord; and that were I to submit to be re-baptized, it could confer no Christian privilege or benefit upon me that may not be enjoyed without it.

T. Very true; and to say the least, to repeat the thing is to trifle with a solemn ordinance—an ordinance which, even to juveniles, God has, in

thousands of cases, blessed, and which, if followed up in its designs, on your part, he will bless to your present and eternal good.

S. Thank God, I can truthfully say, that I fully rest in the belief of infant baptism as scriptural,—also, that baptism by sprinkling, or pouring, by Divine appointment, symbolizes the spirit's baptism, and therefore do hope that I shall never be so weak as to be persuaded by the foolish importunity of any who may attempt to invalidate an ordinance, that has been, and still is precious, to thousands of as holy and intelligent souls as any who constitute a part of the temple of living stones.

T. Stability of character, as it relates to Christian doctrine, is of very great importance, and will prove a benefit to you as long as you shall live.

S. I am pretty sure that I could not be, in any degree, benefitted by changing my belief, either as to the mode, or subjects of baptism.

T. No, my young friend, whatever vain boasters may tell you—as to the great benefit of yielding to their entreaties—you certainly could not, by falling into the snare, become more wise, more holy, or more useful.

S. To me, the proofs you have advanced, in favor of infant baptism, are highly satisfactory.

T. We shall now sum up the evidence already adduced in favor of the baptismal right of children.

This has been supported by a reference ;—First, to “the free gift,” which has extended to all our race. Secondly, to the ancient custom, by Divine authority, of receiving children into the Jewish Church from its first formation in the family of Abraham. Thirdly, to the exhortation delivered by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost. Fourthly, to the practice of the Apostles who baptized children upon the faith of their parents. Fifthly, to the fact that the covenant made with Abraham and his children was not repealed by the Gospel ;—shown (1st) by the absence of a prohibitory clause ;—(2d) by the conduct of Christ towards, and his declaration respecting the little ones ;—(3d) by the Apostles’ epistles, in which children are addressed as members of Apostolic churches ;—(4th) by the term house, or household, which, when applied to persons, means a family of children ;—(5thly.) by God’s unchanging love to, and continued care for the lambs of the flock, and, therefore, could not be diminished by the introduction of this last, and only perfect dispensation—perfect, chiefly, because, under it, we have a fuller display of the Divine benevolence to our guilty race.

S. It may be asked—If Christian children are admitted to baptism, and baptism be held in lieu of circumcision, why then are they not admitted to

the Lord's Supper as the Jewish children were to the Passover?

T. This objection is founded upon ignorance of the fact,—viz., that the circumstances of the children who partook of the Passover in Egypt were very different from those under which ours are placed, or even that of the remnant who were permitted to enter the promised land. The Passover in Egypt was a token of the temporal salvation of every one of them from death; and besides, it was necessary for their support just on the eve of their exodus or departure from that place. Under the law, be it observed, there were two ordinances answering to baptism and the Lord's Supper—circumcision and sacrifices. Now, as infants were circumcised, but not required to offer sacrifices—so, under the Gospel, they are baptized, but not permitted to commune.

S. I see that all truth is consistent, and, as there is perfect accordance in all its parts, it will bear the strictest test.

T. To scrutinize most strictly its various parts, together with all the evidences that support it, *is to deepen the conviction of its perfect harmony and agreement.*

S. Was there any alteration in the law respecting this ordinance after Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan?

T. Yes ; in Egypt the rite was observed in their respective houses ; but, in the land of Canaan, they were not to eat of it within any of their gates, —this was only to be done in the place of Jehovah's choice. (Deut. xvi. 2, 5, 6.) Here all their males were to appear three times a year, and *laden* with offerings, (verse 16, 17.) Could infants obey this command ? It is plain they could not, and it is equally plain they did not ; for Jesus himself attended not the Temple till he was twelve years of age, and though by circumcision a debtor, to do the whole law, yet he did not conceive that he was, thereby,—the ceremonial being still binding, and which he fulfilled in part, by receiving that bloody rite,—obligated to attend the Passover at an earlier period than that mentioned by the Evangelist. The Jewish doctors, you will recollect, found him very expert at that age in answering questions, and therefore, as to understanding, quite eligible to attend the Passover.

S. I see very clearly that it does not follow, that as children are fit subjects for baptism, that therefore they must be fit also for the Lord's Supper.

T. It is indeed satisfactory to know that you so far understand the subject ; but least you should be puzzled with another question that is frequently asked, it may be well to call your attention to it—
“If baptism be in the place of circumcision, why

do we baptize females, seeing none but males were circumcised?" In such a case you can simply refer to the distinction that was made under the law between male and female, Jew and Greek, bond and free; but that now, under the Gospel, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither MALE nor FEMALE,*"—that is,—the distinction, as to national or natural unfitness, can have no existence under a dispensation of universal benevolence and mercy. You can refer also to the fact as given by Maimonides, a learned Jew, who, in speaking of Gentile proselytes, says, "In all ages, when a heathen (or stranger by nation) was willing to enter into the covenant of Israel and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon himself the yoke of the law—he must be *first circumcised*, and *secondly* BAPTIZED, and *thirdly* BRING A SACRIFICE; or if the party were a woman, then she must be *first* BAPTIZED, and *secondly* BRING A SACRIFICE." This, then, is the initiatory rite, which, with the new form of words, we find in the great commission given by Christ to his Apostles—which rite was to take the place of circumcision, or in other words, to continue,—*being administered under the law*,—in the Church after the former bloody one had ceased; and which was, as we

learn, to be administered to its proper subjects without distinction of sex.

S. But have not some asserted that in no period, for the first three or four hundred years after Christ, or his Apostles, has any mention in any writings been made of heathen proselytes having been so admitted into the Jewish Church?

T. Yes; some, without understanding the evidence of the fact, have so expressed themselves upon the subject. The evidence of the fact—mark it well—does not only depend on Jewish records; but, likewise,—“It was in circulation among the heathen, as we learn from the clear and demonstrative testimony of Epictetus, who, (blaming individuals for their inconsistency,) has these words,—‘And when we see any one wavering, we are wont to say, This not a *Jew*, but acts one. But when he assumes the sentiments of one who hath been *baptized* and *circumcised*, then he both really is, and is called a Jew.’” Epictetus is placed by Le Clerc, A. D. 104. It is said that he could not be less than sixty years of age when he referred to the baptized, and that he might have obtained his information thirty or forty years earlier, which would bring us up to the time of the Apostles. “Those who could think that the Jews could institute *proselyte* baptism at the very moment when the Christians were practising baptism as an initia-

tory rite, are not to be envied the correctness of their judgment." When proselytes were baptized, their children, if they had any, were also baptized, and which, as a Christian rite, was designed to symbolize their being washed from the pollution of idolatry.

S. Such is the effect of the information you have given upon the subject before us, that I do believe it will render my mind, by the blessing of God, full proof against all the sophistry and foolish importunacy of the proselytizers.

T. You are to be commended for the attention you have paid to the subject, and I do trust you will hereby be saved from that perplexity of mind into which some,—by the influence of, no doubt, sincere but restless spirits—have been unhappily driven—while at the same time, your heart will be left free to seek after daily baptisms of the Spirit, which, with every enlightened Christian, is all in all.

S. I must say, I feel much grieved when the rights of juveniles are invaded—alas! invaded without a scriptural warrant.

T. Very true; there is no scriptural authority for such a line of conduct. Children are, and have been members of Christian churches since the days of the Apostles down to the present time, while all of them who have died before the dawn of reason,

have been admitted to the Church triumphant. And now, while we have gone thus far, I wish you to understand, that within the vast universe of God, there are—where souls exist—but two places in which infants are not found.

S. My curiosity leads me to inquire where that can be?—*where!*

T. The places to which I refer are not both in this world; one of them belongs to the disembodied state, where, according to divine revelation, there are but two places—*heaven and hell*. To the former children assuredly go after this life; but not to the latter.—*In the world of woe no children can be found*. The other place you will find among the Churches of Christendom, all of which—according to the manifest design of God—embrace children, except the churches of our Baptist brethren. From the former (the pit of destruction) they are saved by the Atonement of Christ, while from the latter they are excluded by *mere human authority*—were it Divine it could be shown—authority first assumed in the sixteenth century. How widely different are these preventives? *The Atonement of Christ, and mere human authority!* The very ground on which children are saved from destruction, is that on which they gain admission into heaven; but the ground of their exclusion from the churches of our erring brethren is, as you have seen, widely

different from that which has saved them from perdition,—this has arisen from false views respecting the nature of the ordinance and the privileges of children, which, to say the least, have not been abridged by “the bringing in of a better hope.”

From what has been advanced you will see that our conduct with regard to infants is in perfect accordance with the language of Moses to the Israelites, —“Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your *little ones*, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of wood to the drawer of water: that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he said unto thee, and as he has sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” (Deut. xxix. 10, 13.) In accordance also with the conduct of Christ, of his Apostles and of the holy angels, who—for the heirs of salvation—“are all ministering spirits, and who joyfully, by the will of God, admit all infants who pass through the gate of death, to the exalted privileges of the church of the first-born in heaven.

S. But it may be said of the passage you have

just quoted, as it has been said of others of like import, and as contained in the Old Testament, that it has no bearing on the subject since the Abrahamic and the Christian Church are not the same,—the former being destroyed to make way for the latter.

T. This it is true has been said, and in the absence of all evidence, it is only an assertion.—But, in proof of the fact, that the Abrahamic and Christian Church are but *one Church* under *one covenant*—the covenant of grace—I will just here refer to one passage, out of many which might be brought forward to prove this point. The expressive portion of the inspiration of which I speak, you will find in Rom. xi. 2—17. Carefully read the whole of this chapter and mark well the design of the Apostle in directing this epistle to the Church at Rome—a Church composed of converted Jews and Gentiles, constituting one fold under one shepherd. “God,” says the Apostle, (2d v.) “*hath not cast away his people, whom he foreknew,—a remnant*” was left, “according to the election of grace,”—the rest “were (judicially) blinded.” Now, mark well! and learn, (v. 17) “and if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them *partakest of the root and fatness* of the olive-tree, boast not against the branches, but if thou boast, *thou bearest not the root, BUT THE ROOT THEE.*” The

Apostle, in the passage now before us, is showing that the Church of God is *one* under each dispensation; and the fact, that the great Head of the Church has broken down the middle wall that separated the Gentiles from the Jewish worshippers in the outer court,—the visible Church—but goes to establish it, nor can the change of the introductory “sign and seal” in the least invalidate its truth.

The figure the Apostle employs is a striking one, that of an “*olive-tree*” with its root, trunk, branches, and fatness or sap. By this he represents the Church, which had its root in Abraham, fastened firm in the divine promises, its trunk, the whole body of Israel, spreading its twelve great branches—the twelve tribes—far and wide; its “fatness” or sap—gospel privileges and gospel blessings—by which the Church “increases with *all the increase of God.*” We learn, from what St. Paul says, that through unbelief some of the natural branches were broken off the olive-tree, while believing Gentiles were grafted in and made, though wild by nature, to partake of the fatness—privileges and blessings—being no longer “foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and the household of God.” Jehovah’s *design* then, in changing the dispensations of his grace, was to favor the olive-tree—the Church—with *more abundant seasons of grace and blessing*

This is pursuant to his purpose, at first, in planting it for the "healing of the nations," but NOT TO UPROOT OR DESTROY IT.

S. But may it not be said that the parable of the fig-tree denotes the Jewish Church, and that the axe, having been laid to the root thereof, denoted that God would cut that tree down, or, in other words, destroy that Church to make way for a new one, and that these views are in perfect accordance with the language of St. Paul, as found in Heb. viii. 8—13.

T. My young friend, in entering more fully into the subject, you will find, that the objection which you have supposed might possibly be raised, or any other that fancy may create, as bearing strongly against the truth of what you have advanced, will be as the "moth crushed before the wind:" for the force of truth must irresistibly carry all before it. To return then to the figure, as forming the ground of the objection of which you speak, "*fig-tree*," you must, to understand the subject aright, take in connection with it the vineyard spoken of. The tree was planted in a *vineyard*. What then, I ask, did the vineyard denote? It unquestionably had reference to the Jewish Church, which, we learn from the parable, he (God) had put a hedge about, &c., to which he sent his servants, the prophets, in the proper season to receive its fruits;

but alas! some of these they beat, some they stoned, and some they killed,—he sent others also, who were shamefully abused like the former,—last of all he sent his own Son, and, when he appeared, they said, “this is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.” This wicked purpose they carried into effect. What now, I ask, was the reply of the chief priests and pharisees, whom Jesus interrogated as to the final result, when the owner of the vineyard should call them to account? Hear then the reply: “*He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and let out his vineyard to others, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.*” This, you perceive, was a common-sense answer to the interrogatory; had they said, that the owner, on his return, would destroy the vineyard, then, in place of punishing the guilty, he would have been represented as devoid of all sense and reason, in destroying his own property, reeking out vengeance on the work of his own hands;—but having answered the question “discreetly,” “Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God (Church) *shall be taken from you* (not destroyed)

and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."—Matt. xxi. 33—43.

S. I perceive then, from what you have advanced, that God has not destroyed his vineyard, or Church, which, according to his own appointment, had its small plants as well as full-grown trees, and is still to include both for the purpose of culture and fruitfulness.

T. It rejoices my heart to see that you comprehend and fully understand what has been said, as to the design of God in the erection of his Church in the family of Abraham, to whom the Gospel was preached; and that its great Founder, (God) far from destroying it, or even contracting its dimensions, has enlarged it immeasurably, so that all the wild olive-trees and plants that are without, may be brought in and cultivated in the delightful garden of the Lord. *God would not have our youth to* "WASTE THEIR BEAUTIES IN THE DESERT AIR!"

S. Well, the more I consider the subject in the light of revelation, the more I feel astonished at the opposition made to the covenant seal being applied to the lambs of Christ's flock, for whom the chief Shepherd has a peculiar care.

T. So, well you may be surprised at such conduct, and your amazement, in this respect, will still increase as your mind becomes more and more en-

lightened by the truth of God—truth which plainly shows that the seal of the covenant should be placed upon the children of believers. Can we, believing the Scriptures as we do, suppose children to be in a worse condition under the Gospel, than they were under the Law? If the law could not disannul the covenant made with Abraham's seed, who, in the nature of things, can show that the Gospel has accomplished such a work? The individual who would attempt to prove this point, proclaims—as far as his ability can do it—that, what we call the Gospel, is not in reality what that term imports—*glad tidings, good news*; but, on the contrary, *heart-rending and melancholy tidings*, that, in fact, our children are left to the *uncovenanted* mercies of God, *without the pale of the Church!!*

But, were there even a folio written upon the absence of an express command for infant baptism, it might indeed display some human ingenuity, but could never prove that the Gospel of St. Paul was widely different from, or opposed to that preached by Abraham. “No changes made by the great Head of the Church, either in the successive dispensations, or seals of the covenant, have altered its nature. To change the *subjects* of the seal, without express authority for so doing, is an invasion of the prerogatives of the King of Zion. The

unrevoked command stands in all its original force, as well as does the reason of the thing. This is our "SCRIPTURAL WARRANT" for connecting with the Church of the living God, the children of those who believe the Gospel; we do so, by placing on them the seal of that covenant of mercy, in which they are included.

S. Some are of opinion, that in Gal. iv. 29, 30, there is a positive prohibition of infants being admitted into the Church.

T. True; Mr. Campbell and others after him have thought so; but, though backed by dogmatical assertions, and followed by sophistical argumentation, they cannot support the hypothesis. Read the passage as it is: "But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." The person here cast out was the bond-woman's son. Now, if we inquire, why he was cast out, we have the reason in these words, "*The son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.*" What then does this passage prove? It certainly proves too much for our opposing brethren; for, whatever it teaches as to the unfitness of children, in the estimation of Mr. Campbell

and his followers, it gives us to understand, that some children at least are fit to be admitted within the pale of the Church ; for the son of the free woman was not excluded. The passage, however, has nothing to do with the subject of baptism. Why, then, should any suffer their faith to be shaken in this blessed doctrine by the sophistry of its opponents? In it let your mind sweetly rest, until our opposing brethren produce a positive Scriptural prohibition, or a Scriptural precedent, to prove that the promise made to them is become void, or the covenant broken, in a word, *that the immutable God of truth* IS FALSIFIED ; but as this never can be done, the basis, therefore, on which our faith rests, is as immovable as the pillars of heaven. Could infants do anything to forfeit their claim to the promise given to them, a promise including spiritual blessings? Or could they, by any means, break the covenant in which they are included, and thereby forfeit their membership with God's covenant people? *Impossible! impossible!!*

S. I learn, then, from what you have just said, that our dissenting brethren may dwell as much as they please upon the subject of believer's baptism, and yet leave untouched the arguments which successfully defend the claims of children to the seal of the covenant that includes them.

T. We also, as well as our Baptist friends, believe

in believer's baptism as scriptural ; but, though we agree in this particular, it does not tempt us to take away the covenant rite of the little ones, which rests entirely on different ground. As it was formerly, according to the conditions of the promises of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, so it is now under the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, which, in fact, is the same as that which was preached to Abraham. Faith, under the law, was required of adults, in order to receive the seal of the covenant ; but the incapacity of infants to believe, could not, and did not deprive them of that symbolic rite. Faith, now, is required of adults, in order to be baptized ; but not of infants, in order to their induction, by the appointed "sign and seal," into the visible Church.

S. Some have endeavored to maintain that the Abrahamic covenant was not to continue, and therefore was not substantially the same as the covenant of grace.

T. That no mode of argument can make it different from the covenant of grace spoken of by St. Paul, or that it was chiefly political and national, will appear quite evident by a proper consideration of the promises of that covenant, which, we believe, was no other than the general covenant of grace, though connected with temporary promises and privileges. Now, the first promise that God made

to Abraham we have in these words ; *“I will bless thee.”* (Gen. xii. 2.) This promise, although it included temporal blessings, had, as St. Paul informs us, more particular reference to the superior blessing of the sinner’s justification before God, including, also, all the spiritual benefits arising from his covenant relationship with God. The second promise in the covenant we have in these words ; *“And thou shalt be a father of many nations.”* (Gen. xvii. 4.) The Apostle confines this more particularly to his spiritual seed,—*“That the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to that which is by the law, but to that also which is by the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”* The third promise in the covenant runs thus : *“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.”* (v. 8.) These words, according to the language of St. Paul, included the promise of a heavenly Canaan, of which the earthly was but a mere type, *“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise,”*—*“they looked for a City which had foundations, whose founder and maker is God.”* (Heb. ii. 10.) The fourth promise is as follows : *“I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.”* (v. 7.) Here,

then, we have a promise, not only including the privileges of a visible Church, but also the most exalted blessings attainable on earth—*justification and sanctification*. The fifth promise is recorded thus: “*And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*” This promise, in the estimation of this great Apostle, comprised the justification of believers in Christ of every nation. “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen by faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.”—Gal. iii. 8, 9.

From what has just been said, you see clearly, that, notwithstanding the political economy and nationality of character and all necessary appendages, included in the Abrahamic covenant, it embodied under all these, as types, spiritual and eternal blessings, well secured—irrespective of nation—to all who, by faith, are the children of Abraham.

As the Abrahamic covenant included the promise of spiritual, as well as temporal blessings, circumcision was the sign and seal of both: “And he received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised.” Again, the provision of spiritual blessings was made for the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, as well as those of Isaac and Jacob.

The sign and seal was not, as we learn, confined to Abraham's children; but extended to all his servants and to all proselytes, thus showing, that Jehovah's design, according to various express declarations of Scripture, was, that the great provision of spiritual blessings spoken of, should extend to all who believingly receive the covenant-seal, whether Jew or Gentile.

Under the law of Moses circumcision was re-enacted, that the temporal provision of the covenant, according to its original design, might be confined to the descendants of Isaac and Jacob, but which could not make the promise of spiritual blessings, designed for all men and given 430 years before, of none effect. Our Lord, referring to the symbolic rite as re-enacted by the Jewish lawgiver, says: "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers, and ye circumcise on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a child receive circumcision, that the *law of Moses* may not be violated, &c." (John vii. 22.) Children then, as you will perceive, received at once the sign and seal, not only of the restricted temporal blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, but also of the superior spiritual blessings, which were not restricted to the line of Isaac and Jacob, but, likewise, extended to all believing Gentiles.

S. It appears then,—according to the general

covenant of grace,—that the provision of spiritual blessings, both under the Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian dispensations, was, and is still confined to believers among all nations, although its *external* religious privileges extend to those who are merely nominally so.

T. What you have said is very correct when confined to adults, but cannot, in anywise, affect the case of infants, who have—as we have seen—received the sign and seal of the superior as well as the inferior provision of the covenant; and who receive the provision of spiritual and eternal blessings, without any condition of faith on their part, and which they never can forfeit till they are capable of faith, when it will—not till then—be justly required of them. As to adults, the faith required—of which circumcision was an act—had for its object “the seed of Abraham,” in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. “Which seed,” says St. Paul, “is Christ;” Christ promised, not yet come. Now, be it well observed, the temporal provision of the covenant and circumcision, its sign and seal, were only to continue till the promised “Seed” should come, and by his sacrificial death bruise the head of the serpent, break down the middle wall that existed between Jew and Gentile, and thus abrogate what in the covenant was peculiar, that there might be one fold and one

shepherd. Hence, circumcision as an act of that faith, the object of which was "Christ promised, not yet come," together with the faith of which it was an act, must, of course, have ceased on the fulfillment of the leading promise of the covenant, by the coming of Christ.

S. Am I, here, to understand that what was peculiar in the covenant, was only to continue in force till Christ hung upon the cross?

T. Yes, I wish this to be impressed upon your mind, and also to remember that, on the cross, Jesus cried, "It is finished!" that is, the ceremonial law is now abolished; that, being "contrary to us, he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." The middle wall thus being removed, Christ, therefore, after his resurrection,—that all, according to the promise, in him might be blessed and brought into visible church-form with *external* religious privileges,—commanded the Gospel to be preached to every creature. *We have now come to the very point at which the seal of circumcision ceased,—the abolition of the Jewish ceremonial,—and, in the great commission, that at which the new form of the seal was given, and which, on the day of Pentecost, was first applied.*

S. It may be said, that one thing cannot take the place of another till the former is taken away, and that the believing Jews continued to circum-

cise their children: and certain therefore, that they did not have them baptized instead of being circumcised.

T. It will be readily granted, that one thing cannot take the place of another till the former is taken away. Circumcision, as has been considered, was only binding until the promised "Seed" should come,—this was fulfilled in the personal appearance of Christ, by whom the bloody rite should be annuled to make way for the new seal. Can we then fairly infer from the fact, that believing Jews having still continued to circumcise their children, that it was not abrogated? No, common sense forbids the conclusion. That they attended, after their conversion to Christianity, to the abrogated ceremonial, we do not deny; but we say, if they performed the then obsolete right according to its original design, as the sign and seal of the restricted promise of the Abrahamic covenant still, as we have seen in force, till the promised "Seed" should come—then did they proclaim by that act that Christ had not yet appeared, and at the same time profess to believe in him as already come; or if they attended to it as the sign and seal of the Mosaic covenant, which was the former in both its parts, but with the added ceremonial—the offering of rams and lambs, &c.,—obligatory on all who entered into that covenant by circumcision,

then did it include the belief, that the “imposed” ritual was still binding, and that too at the very moment in which they professed faith in him in whom it received its completion ; a law, which, as we learn, was to be in force until the *promised Seed* should come, “the Seed,” then, according to promise, having come, “*the law waxed old and vanished away.*”

From St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, it is evident that there were some who maintained that an observance of the ceremonial law of Moses, united with a general belief in Christ as the true Messiah, was necessary to their justification before God. Against a belief so ruinous in its tendency, the Apostle had to use strong language, and *that* he had to reiterate in these words, “I testify *again* to every man that is *circumcised* that he is a *debtor* to do *the whole law* ; *whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.*”—Gal. v. 3, 4.

You will now have learned, from what has been advanced, that circumcision, as practised by converted Jews in the Apostolic age, does not prove that Christ did not take it away, and that were we to maintain the contrary it would contradict the Apostle, who has, in the most express terms, proved that it was not then any longer binding, either on Jew or Gentile. It may, however, be asked, why did St. Paul circumcise Timothy if he knew that

rite was then obsolete ? or how are we to reconcile his conduct with his condemnation of the practice ? To meet this question, and to remove the difficulty connected with it, let it be well observed that the Apostle took two views of circumcision — the stronger view you have in the passage already quoted, (Gal. v. 3, 4.) The milder one he entertained on the ground of expediency when he circumcised Timothy. (Acts xvi. 3.) Circumcision in this case could not have been performed by St. Paul to answer its original design, forasmuch as it could not have been done innocently, or consistently with his own stronger and strongly expressed view of the subject. (Gal. v. 2—4.) This rite, by the Christian Jews, was practised to preserve their national distinction, in which, as Jews, they were accustomed to glory. We are, then, informed that the Apostle circumcised Timothy—his mother being a Jewess—because of the Jews in those quarters, *i. e.* because of their national prejudices ; “for they knew that his father was a Greek.”

As to the assertion, that the believing Jews who had their children circumcised did not have them baptized, I must say, that it is one unsupported by reason or revelation. We might just as well assert that because the parents had been circumcised they did not get baptized. Why might they not just as well have both seals, the old and the new ; applied

to their children, as to themselves. If the same reason which led to their being circumcised, led them to circumcise their children, would not the same motive and principle which prompted them, as Jews, to be baptized, induce them to have their children baptized also ?

S. It may be said that the substitution of infant baptism for the immersion of believers destroys the significancy of the ordinance.

T. It may indeed be so asserted ; but can never be proved. This assertion of our opposing brethren is made upon the supposition that immersion strikingly represents the union of believers with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection ; and that by it, all who religiously submit to be immersed, declare their belief in the resurrection of Christ, and of all in him. But where is the resemblance between *immersion* and the *death* of Christ ? In what does it consist ? It certainly cannot consist in the body being put under water ; for Christ's death took place upon a mount, and when elevated upon the cross to which his tender flesh was nailed. And where is the resemblance between *that mode* and the *burial* of Christ ? Was not the body of Christ laid in a sepulchre of solid rock, where it was secured by priestly precaution until the third day ? There is nothing then in immersion to resemble any thing in the burial of Christ, except by

the sudden popping of the body under water, it is concealed for a moment from the view of man. But how does immersion represent the resurrection of Christ? It may be said that *immersion* does not, but that *emersion*, which immediately follows it, does represent the rising of Christ out of the excavated rock. Here, then, we have two distinct things, — *immersion* and *emersion*, — maintained even by those who *positively* affirm that the word *baptize* means *immersion* and *nothing else!* — NOT EVEN EMERSION!!

S. If then the baptism of believers by immersion does not represent the *death, burial, and resurrection of Christ*, are we to suppose that the baptism of infants by the mode of our choice, represents these things?

T. No; but on the contrary, you are to understand that we do not contend that infant baptism by sprinkling or pouring—I say, sprinkling or pouring, for both scripturally represent the “coming down” of the Spirit, or as *active* in the “one baptism” spoken of by St. Paul,—represents all, or even any of the things which our opponents say immersion symbolizes; but we do maintain that the baptism of infants by the application of water in the name of the Triune God, is not only a visible and public reception into, but also a visible and public acknowledgment, by the

Church of Christ, that they are included in God's gracious covenant of mercy — likewise, of the “bestowment of a title to all the grace of the covenant as circumstances may require, and as the mind of the child may be capable, or made capable, on receiving it; and as it may be sought in after life by prayer, when the period of reason and moral choice shall arrive.” In a word, it is a sign far more significant in its form than that of circumcision, because it more *strikingly* represents one of the chief blessings of the higher branch of the Abrahamic covenant, viz., the baptism of the Spirit, of which we are sure children are capable: for Christ took infants in his arms and blessed them, not formally but efficaciously.

This ordinance gives the enlightened parents to understand that, if they train up their offspring as they ought to do, God will not only be their God, but “the God of their seed after them; and also that they do hereby publicly profess their belief in the doctrine of original sin, that children do not bring into the world with them a nature pure: but on the contrary, a natural bias to evil,—in the doctrine of regeneration, which, in fact, is typified in the ordinance by the application of water, and in which, by the presentation of their offspring, they likewise express their determination to attend to the Apostolic injunction, to “bring up their children in the

nurture and admonition of the Lord.” God designs that the ordinance should tend to parental fidelity. Now, in consideration of these things,—others of like nature might be advanced—I would here inquire, How can the public administration of baptism to infants—a thing so solemn and significant in itself, so wise and holy in its design and tendencies,—destroy the significancy, or, in the least, affect the baptism of believers? The assertion that it does so, is groundless; and the brother who so expresses himself displays, to say the least, great ignorance of its *nature* and *design*. True; it may be said again, and again, that it does not represent the death of Christ; though—“In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established”—it represents it just as much as immersion does; but after all, what has this to do with the *design* of baptism? That it has,—from the revelation of God—**NO MAN LIVING CAN PROVE**. When did Christ ever institute, under the Gospel dispensation, any ordinance as commemorative and representative of his death, except the sacrament of his Holy Supper? Is it not by this, and this alone, as a divinely appointed ordinance that we are to show forth his death until he come?

S. But it is said that infant baptism makes one of the commands of God of none effect, because, were the practice of infant baptism to become uni-

versal among those who bear the Christian name, there obviously would not be an instance in all Christendom in which an individual would obey the divine command to be baptized.

T. The command to which your refer is that, as I suppose, contained in the great commission. Let it then be well understood that this command was given to the Apostles exclusively as the proper administrators of the ordinance—of course not to the people, and this command they obeyed. The personal ministry of Christ and that of his Apostles during that ministry were confined to the Jews, but after Christ, by his death, had broken down the middle wall, and a little before his ascension, he gave his Apostles to understand that their ministry was to be no longer confined to the Jews, but that the heathen world lay before them—that into it they were to enter and preach the Gospel to every creature, giving all to understand that the promised Seed was come; in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed—observe—*all families*—those including old and young, and first, by the tenor of their commission, they were to administer the ordinance of baptism to all who would believe what they were authorized to proclaim. From this you will learn that believer's baptism must necessarily have preceded the baptism of infants, and must still continue to do so, wherever the Gospel is first

embraced in heathen lands ; then, but not till then, will the ministers of Christ find themselves in circumstances exactly similiar to those under which the Apostles acted when they preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, who, before that time, had not heard its blessed sound. Where then is there a command in the commission, or any part of the New Testament, that infant baptism makes of none effect ? There is not one. The infants of those heathens, to whom the Apostles carried the glad tidings, could not have been, nor can the infants of heathens now be baptized without previous obedience to the *implied*, but not to them, *expressed* command in the commission. Let us suppose, for a moment, that the practice of infant baptism were a universal thing throughout Christendom. What then ? True ; there would in that case be no adults to receive the ordinance ; and is it not to be regretted that there should be found in Christian lands, those who were not in infancy, presented in thankful hands to receive the seal and sign of the covenant—alas ! there are many—far too many—brought up within its precincts who have not been baptized in infancy ! Now, were the reverse of all this the case, then would it prove that the command had been universally obeyed, and that the design of the parents' baptism has been followed up with regard to their children, who, it is expected, when arrived to the

age of reason, and in carrying out the design of their own baptism, or early dedication to God, will use their influence and property to have the object of the great commission carried out in heathen lands, that the time may come when all the nations of the earth shall be Christianized. Suppose then again, that believers baptism had ceased throughout the whole world by the universal practice of infant baptism, it would only prove, as we have seen, that the command—by the cheerfully willing ambassadors and co-operation of the well instructed parents—had been universally obeyed, and that its design was so far accomplished as that the whole world of mankind were now included within the pale of the Church, just as all the Jews were within the Jewish Church when settled in the land of Canaan, and when adult circumcision with them had ceased by the general practice of infant circumcision. From what has been said, it will no doubt forcibly strike you that—according to the mode of reasoning adopted by our opponents—a captious Jew might have objected against infant circumcision thus,—“The practice of infant circumcision makes one of the commands of God of none effect, because were the practice to become universal among the Jews, there obviously would not be an instance among us, in which an individual would obey the command given to our father

Abraham to be circumcised.” You are now to understand that the circumcising of infants, according to the design of God, became the universal practice in the Jewish Church, and of course, adult circumcision, in which, like baptism, the practice commenced, then ceased, except in the case of proselytism. And should not adult baptism cease by the practice of infant baptism, except in the case of heathen proselytes? The seal of the covenant, as we have seen, was changed by Divine authority; but without the same authority we dare not make any change in the *subjects* of the seal, and he who would attempt it assumes the prerogatives of Zion’s lawgiver. “The *unrevoked* command stands in all its original force, as well as does the reason of the thing.” When Christ as Head of the Church had changed the seal, he gave his Apostles orders—when opening the gate of the common salvation to the Gentiles, by preaching to them the Gospel—to apply the seal to all families,—so it should be understood—the heads of which believe like Abraham of old, who, in consequence of that faith received the old seal, and in whose *Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. You will not find then the words of the commission, when understood in accordance with the whole analogy of faith on this point, opposed to, or in anywise discordant with what we have advanced

upon the subject. These words are as follows,—
“Go ye, therefore, and teach ALL NATIONS,
baptizing THEM,” etc.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

S. I do believe what you have advanced—
here my mind finds a quiet harbor of rest—to be
perfectly correct, at least in all that is essential as to
mode or *subject*, and that it leaves, in relation
thereto, the harmony of the Scriptures unbroken;
but as it may be objected that infant baptism tends
to obliterate the distinction between Christian
Churches and the unregenerate world, permit me
to ask,—How are we to meet the objection?

T. It is highly proper that you should have
your mind—not to indulge in a caviling spirit—
well armed against the wily attempts of those
sincere, but mis-guided brethren who would if they
could, by such futile objections, work all who have
been baptized in infancy, into a feverish desire for
a *second* introduction into the Visible Church.
This, we judge, is the design of those who throw
out the objection of which you speak, an objection
founded on the supposition that children belong to
the world; but which we—while believers in the
doctrine of original sin—*totally deny*. We found
this confident mode and firm tone of expression
upon the doctrine of “the free gift,” which, by the
obedience of Christ, has come upon them—that
they are interested in the covenant of grace, and

therefore belong to the kingdom of God, the Church below and the Church above. On this ground then were they to die in infancy, they would, without either repentance or faith on their part, gain admittance into heaven; but should they live to the age of moral sense and reason, and then not make choice of religion, and so grow up without showing any evidence of the fear of God, no Christian Church exercising proper discipline would, in such a case, acknowledge them members. And, alas! how many, since their admission, at an earlier or later period, into the Church, have by their own disobedience forfeited the great privilege of membership, and living and dying in this state, must be shut out of heaven! Suppose then they sincerely repent,—Should they not be admitted again into the same Church, or any other Christian Church, without being re-baptized?

You now plainly see that the practice of infant baptism does not tend to obliterate the distinction between Christian Churches and the ungenerate world, that the practice of Pedobaptist Churches generally, which, to say the least, can boast of as much piety as those of our dissenting brethren, have not as yet, either on a large or small scale, shown itself to be such a leveler in its tendency as to break down the line of demarcation between the

Church and the world—the world itself being witness.

That much evil has resulted from the neglect of the important duties arising out of the nature and design, as well as those immediately connected with the administration of the ordinance is a lamentable truth; but the abuse of the thing cannot, with any degree of propriety, be brought as an argument against its scriptural design. Now where the Apostolic injunction is attended to, and proved by the successful training up of children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” to be practicable, ministers in such a case can consistently, with scriptural precedents before them, address the previously inducted and devoutly consecrated juveniles as members of the Church, as “in the Lord;” but not those adults who have forfeited their membership; for, having once done so, the fact of their being at a former period admitted, when free from the guilt of actual transgression, as members of the Visible Church, will not prevent their expulsion.

From what has been said, in answer to the objection which you desired me to meet, you will have learned, that those who make themselves so unfortunate as to have no name or place among God’s people, do, at the same time, forfeit the blessings of the covenant of which their baptism was the sign, and can never regain their interest

in that covenant without repentance and faith. On their repentance they may and ought to regain admittance, without the re-baptism of water, into the visible Church ; but without faith they cannot receive the Spirit's baptism, by which alone we enter the true spiritual or invisible Church.

It is incumbent on all ministers of Christ, zealously to guard all under their influence against resting in mere forms or ceremonies, or exalting a visible baptism, connected with visibilities—active hands, the entire human form, water pure or impure—above its proper place, and earnestly to exhort all who have arrived to the age of moral choice, heartily to seek the thing signified by that simple, but, by some, much abused and neglected rite—water baptism.

In guarding you here against the wiles and undignified intrigues of our much mistaken brethren, I would sincerely advise you to cultivate towards them a spirit of Christian charity ; but at the same time you will have to watch their movements as to yourself, not only when they act the part of the importunate widow, but also when they *seem* less bent on drawing you from the efficient ministry of your choice. They will, no doubt, inquire—“How can you possibly keep yourself—there being so many things to induce and persuade—from following the example of our blessed Sa-

viour, who was immersed by John the Baptist in Jordan ?” If, to such an interrogatory, you give a passing notice, you can simply say,—The Scriptures nowhere teach that Christ’s body was buried in water to prefigure his subsequent deposit in the excavated rock—nor is there any man living that can prove that Jesus was immersed, because there is no part of the New Testament that furnishes the information, nor is there any law, moral or ceremonial, that he could fulfill by such a mode ; but, in whatever way he was baptized, it certainly was not intended as an example for us, except so far as it relates to general obedience.

I will now suppose that you are in the character of a true penitent, or young believer in Christ, which I trust you are,—in such a case your mind will be taken up with the work of the Spirit in the heart, which will, of course, engross your thoughts. Would it not then be a very great evil for any one of our much mistaken brethren,—could they prevail in directing your thoughts to the subject of water, to have you borne down by the low chilling current ? You know it would, and that they who use their influence so to do, cannot, whatever may be said to the contrary, be your real friends. True, they may indeed be very sincere, and may speak too upon the subject with all the gentleness of a loving Christian,—but, you must neither be influenced on

he one hand by ignorance or dogmatism,—nor, on the other, by the plausibleness of the arguments, or the eloquence, or even the piety, however deep, of the advocate of a system long since condemned by the universal Church, and which manifestly has no foundation in Divine revelation. Experience, too, will be made to yield its quota in support of the darling hypothesis, and hence you will be informed, that by submitting to have your body buried in the watery grave, you will be greatly benefitted; that you will have more light, that you will not be in bondage, &c.,—that they have themselves proved this and hundreds more have had it happily ratified in their personal experience. But, though this should be asserted even a hundred times over, there is not, I assure you, a blessing of which they speak—if included in the covenant of grace—that you may not have without the sinful folly of being re-baptized. Suppose, then, you were now—having never been baptized—to present yourself as a candidate for the ordinance of baptism, you certainly could not, understanding the subject as you do, make choice of a mode which would, like an electric shock, disturb or confuse the mind, which should then be calmly, in the exercise of faith, stayed upon God. Can then the rejection of a mode, productive of such an unpleasant effect, and the preference of and submission to one that is

scriptural—the mode of our choice—and one which cannot in the least prevent that calmness of spirit, which is essential to that rational and acceptable service, which Jehovah requires at our hand, deprive you of any blessing! No! no!! my young friend, though ministers and people unite to tell you so,—**THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE!!!** By way of proof I will here call your attention to a single case, not the only one that came under my own observation. The case to which I refer, was that of an individual, who, having never seen the rite of baptism performed, except by immersion, requested to be baptized in that way; but the minister could not conscientiously comply, as that mode, being in his judgment defective, would not represent the thing intended, and what never should be lost sight of,—the work of the Spirit—His active operations, as well as the effect of those operations. However, being governed by the purest motives and principles, he submitted to have it scripturally administered, by the expressive mode of pouring.—What then was the immediate result of his godly submission? Just what might be expected; for God would indeed be faithful to his promises and faithful to his Son,—*it was stamped with the Divine signature*,—the man was blessed, unspeakably blessed, nor is it likely that he will ever forget that memorable occasion.

I will now call your attention to another method that some of our erring brethren adopt, which, though simple in itself, yet, being mischievous in its results, it is well that you should be put on your guard. They will, if they cannot succeed by any other means, advise you to make it a matter of prayer, knowing, I suppose, as they do, that, if they could but get you to comply, in this respect, with their request, it would, in the nature of things, work, imperceptibly, the idea of immersion into your mind ; thus would they press your very devotions into their service, causing, if possible, their fearfully magnified god, aqua, to intrude upon those golden moments of your time, which should, you know, be exclusively employed in *wrestling with the one living and true God* ; for what is of infinitely greater importance to you than any work performed by a fellow mortal—the *full salvation of the deathless, blood-bought soul* !

Dismiss, then, at once and forever, such low, cold and watery thoughts from your mind, should they unhappily enter, as impertinent intruders upon the hours of your closet devotions. Re-baptism, then, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, being sinful ; with some, we hope, the sin of ignorance should not, at any time, be made a subject for prayer, and, indeed, to do so, makes it at once a matter of con-

science,—a supposed duty, on which the mind as yet cannot decide, until God, in answer to prayer, is pleased to make it plain. This, again, supposes, that the Scriptures do not sufficiently teach it, otherwise no soul could possibly be induced to pray to Almighty God to make known to their minds in particular what he had already clearly revealed to them in his word. From this, therefore, we conclude, that the weak-minded are placed in an unenviable situation, as subjects of doubt, and fear, and tender sensibilities; by an influence, underived either from Divine revelation or the Spirit of God. Not from the Scriptures of truth, for they do not explicitly teach the supposed duty; nor yet from the Holy Spirit, for there are many who have given themselves up to his guidance, and though they “live and walk in the Spirit,” they are not thereby inclined to the formality of a second introduction into the Visible Church. No Christian, who understands as he ought the nature of the simple, but significant ordinance, could ever think of this, or at any time suffer his mind to be brought into bondage, or in the least disturbed about what is at the best, in its own nature, as extremely foolish as it is hypothetical in character.

The object of the efforts put forth by some of our dissenting brethren is, to *do* and *undo*; to get, if possible, the whole of Christendom just like the

troubled ocean, that it may be stilled again by a plunge of all the unimmersed in what is called "the blessed pool," &c. That this may be accomplished, everything, in fact, is done, that tends, according to the judgment of the administrator, to make the celebration of the ordinance as captivating as possible; words, gestures and singing, are all made subservient to the accomplishment of this end; but, after all, I must say, it is somewhat

"Like ocean into tempest tost,
To waft a feather or to drown a fly."

Should you, my young friend, at any time be led by curiosity to view the simple captive go forth, under the supposition that they are following an example set them by the great Head of the Church, when they submit to be plunged in river, pond, or lake, there can be no fear, in such a case, of your being favorably excited by any effort that may be made, as long as you consult the *Scriptures*, *reason*, and *ecclesiastical history on the subject*. True; there may and ought to be sympathy felt for and manifested towards the parents and relations of those, who are drawn away from the Scriptural principles they have been taught, by such untoward conduct. If you consult the *Scriptures*, you will find there is neither *command* nor *precedent* for anything of the kind. If you consult *reason*,

you will *condemn* it as being, to say the least, in many cases *very indelicate* and *imprudent*, and in every case **ALTOGETHER UNNECESSARY**. If you consult *ecclesiastical history*, you will see, that those who are fond of ostentation, appearances, sounds, &c., in connection with religious ceremonies, should go at once to the Church of Rome to be gratified. How truly wonderful the means this Church employs to draw the unsuspecting into her Convents, and which, alas! has prevailed with many to their ruin? Beware! ah! beware!! of *all* **IMPOSING and UNSCRIPTURAL religious ceremonies!!!**

Be not deceived by any specious mode of reasoning which may be advanced to justify such conduct. Some, for instance, may attempt to justify it thus, —“ Believing as we do that there is a Divine command to be baptized,—is it not our duty then to use strenuous efforts to have all to obey what is binding upon all?” The line of conduct here alluded to is attempted to be justified on the ground that immersion is a commanded duty, whereas, in fact, *there is no such command in all the “Book” of God*. But suppose it was as plainly commanded as is the strict and religious observance of the Sabbath contained in the Decalogue—why then should there be more anxious desire manifested—manifested by combined, untiring and strenuous efforts

for universal obedience to the former, than there is for the observance of the latter command? The reason I think, to speak in charity and the bounds of truth, will be found in this—obedience to the former will swell the number of their members; but were they to contend ever so zealously for the sanctity of the Sabbath it would not produce the same result which, with some, is “all in all.” It is a lamentable fact that some—thank God, not all!—who obey the supposed Divine command, are altogether careless as to the observance of the Christian Sabbath.

And now, my young friend, though I have spoken so much against that line of conduct which you know is highly reprehensible, and which has made it, as I conceive, a duty on my part, according to my ability, to guard you against the evil to which it tends, I would now earnestly advise you to cultivate to the utmost of your power a spirit of Christian charity towards those who are so characterized.

Think, frequently think of that solemn and highly interesting period of time when free from the guilt of actual transgression, you were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. When the water was applied by the minister in the adorable name of the Triune God, “It was as though he said, ‘We give this child

to God the Father ;' and God the Father had answered, so that all the congregation could hear, ' I will love and bless this child, if it does not refuse my love now promised to it ;' and the minister had added, ' We give this child to its Saviour, Jesus Christ ;' and Christ had answered, ' Of such is the kingdom of God ;—I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me :' ' We give this child to the Holy Ghost ;' and the Holy Ghost had breathed his blessing upon you.

“God remembers your baptism. He has often looked to see if your parents teach you, and pray with you, as they promised they would do when they carried you away from the baptism, as a child given them to bring up for heaven.

“God remembers your baptism. Perhaps you pray to Him when you are alone. He hears your voice and looks into your heart, and knows how you feel. For when you were baptized He made this promise, ' If thou seek me I will be found of thee.'

“Now, though you are young, God knows you and sees you. The same God that watched the infant Moses when he lay in his ark by the river side, and kept him safe till the king's daughter found him and gave him back to his mother, watches you when you sleep, and when you wake, and all the day long. The God who was in the

Temple where Samuel slept, and who spoke in the night, and said, ‘Samuel! Samuel!!’ now sees you; and indeed you are never out of His sight.

“You may have grown up beyond childhood, and have long been old enough to know and love God. He gave you to pious parents that you might early be taught to love and fear Him. It was a special favor to you that God gave you to pious parents.

“Have you ever given yourself to God to be His child? Do you love God, and do you hope that He loves you? Are you ever so happy as when you have prayed, confessing your sins and asking God to forgive and love you? Do you believe and hope that when you die God will take you to heaven, and does it give you joy to think of being in heaven with God? If so you have the highest reason to be thankful and happy. What return can you make to God for His kindness to you? It is your duty and privilege to devote yourself to God’s service and glory. It should be your great question, How can I best please God? Make this question the rule by which you live, and by which you form your plans for future life. For you are not your own; you have been consecrated to God; you belong to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, by the covenant of baptism. What an honor to be thus related to your Maker! Now

let it be your chief desire to do and be that which will best please God.

“If you ask Him to direct you for this purpose He will be pleased to do it. You remember the story of Solomon. God appeared to him in the night and said, Ask what I shall do for thee. And Solomon prayed for heavenly wisdom that he might in the highest and best manner glorify God. And God said, because thou hast not asked riches, wealth, nor honor, nor long life—wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee, and I will give thee riches and wealth and honor.

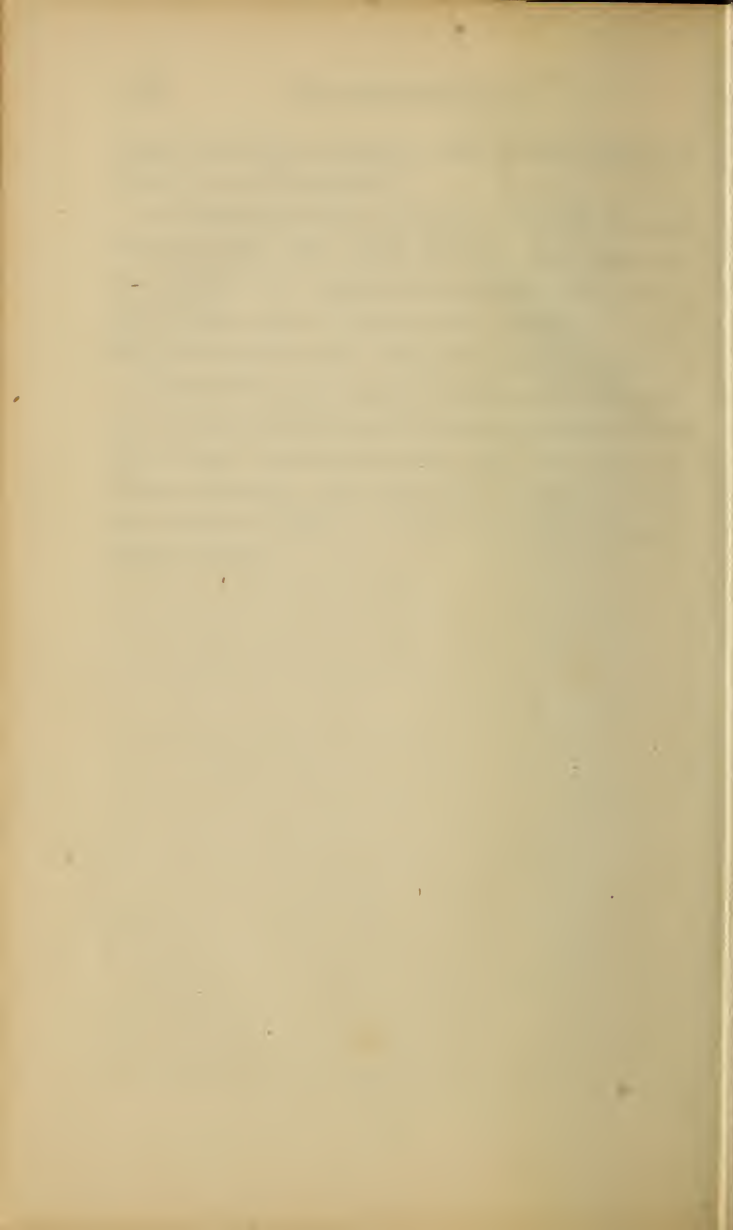
“Now God says, ‘In all thy ways acknowledge me, and I will direct thy paths.’ If you thus acknowledge Him, you may confidently say, ‘Thou will guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.’

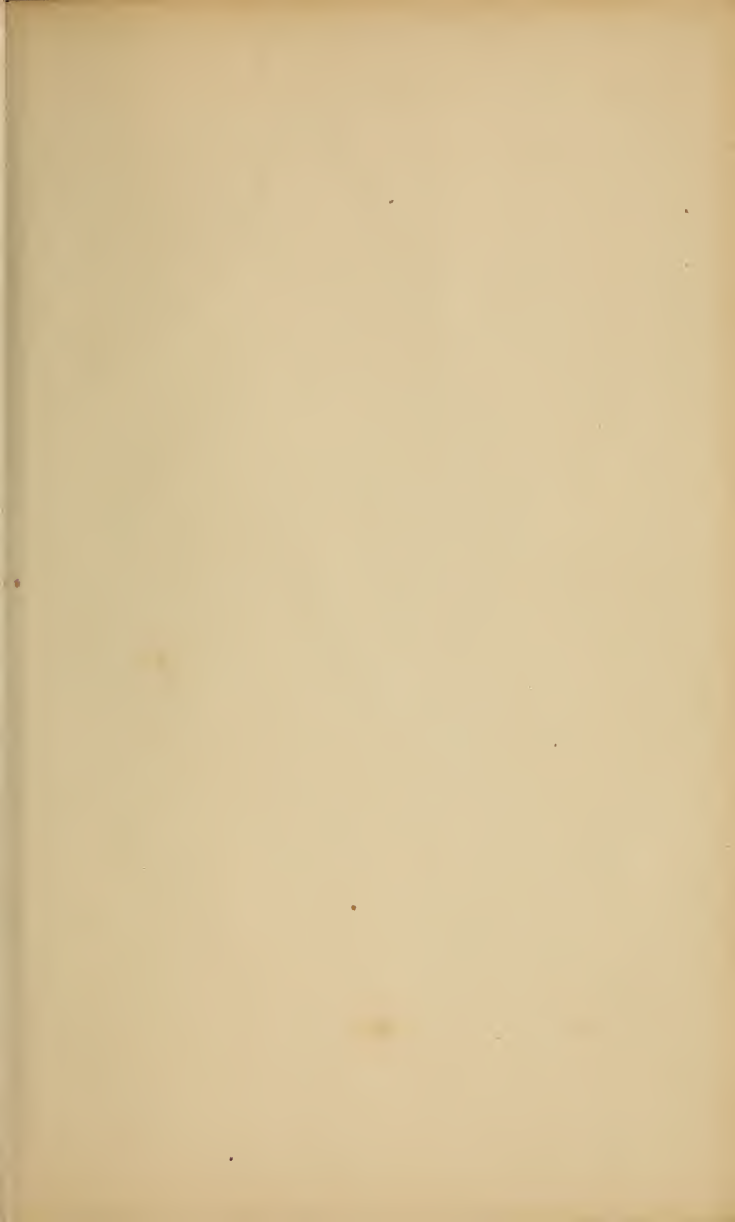
“Besides your daily prayers of consecration to God, it will be profitable for you to find out the day when you were baptized, and keep that day yearly, as a special season of thanksgiving, and of renewing your consecration to God. You will not forget to do the same on your birth-day, consecrating with solemn prayer, your body, soul and spirit to God, and thinking how solemn and important a thing it is to have been born; and that the favor of God alone can prevent it from being an everlasting and dreadful curse, and that with His bless-

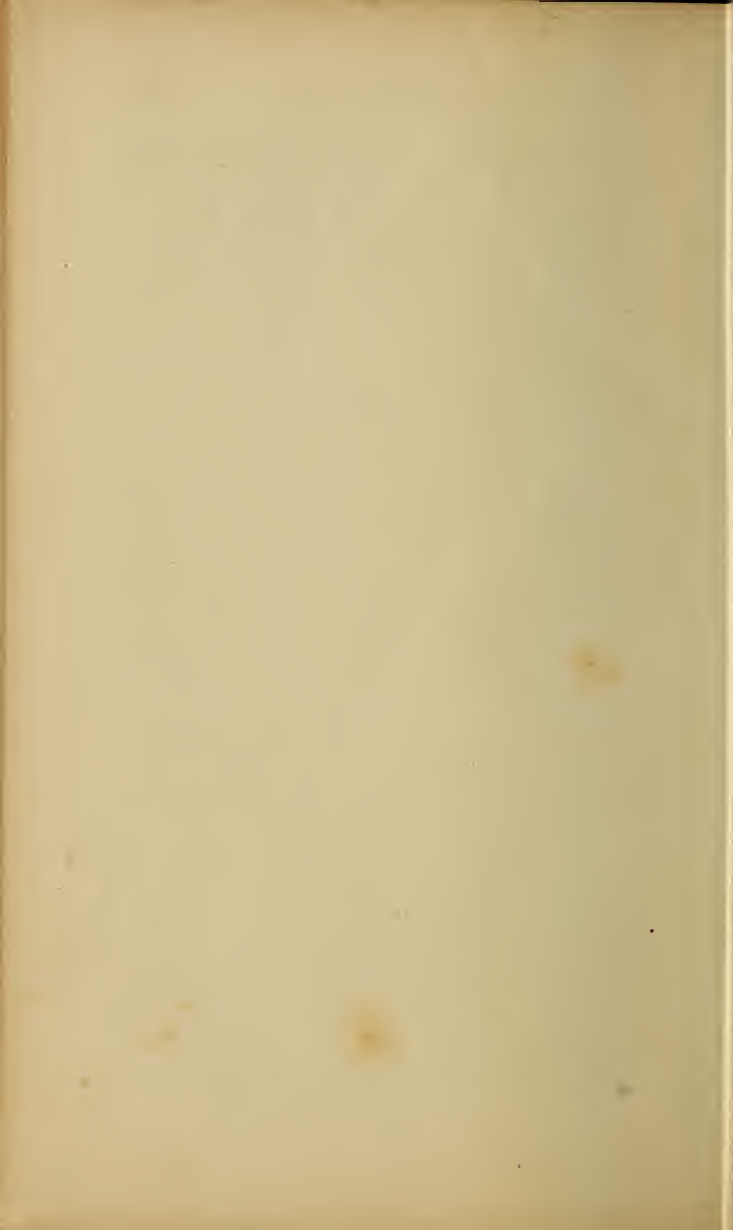
ing, eternal life in heaven will be the delightful and glorious consequence.

“Thus, till you die, as we trust you will through eternity, bless and praise God for your baptism, and renew that consecration through life, and in your dying hour, which, in the morning of your life was like the dew of heaven upon your spirit.”

Then, when you thus not only keep the sign and seal of the covenant once delivered to the saints before your mind ; but also, earnestly seek the blessings of that covenant ; your conscience will be sprinkled from all dead works, to “serve the living and true God.”—AMEN.







Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Sept. 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

D

BV
813

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 670 318 5